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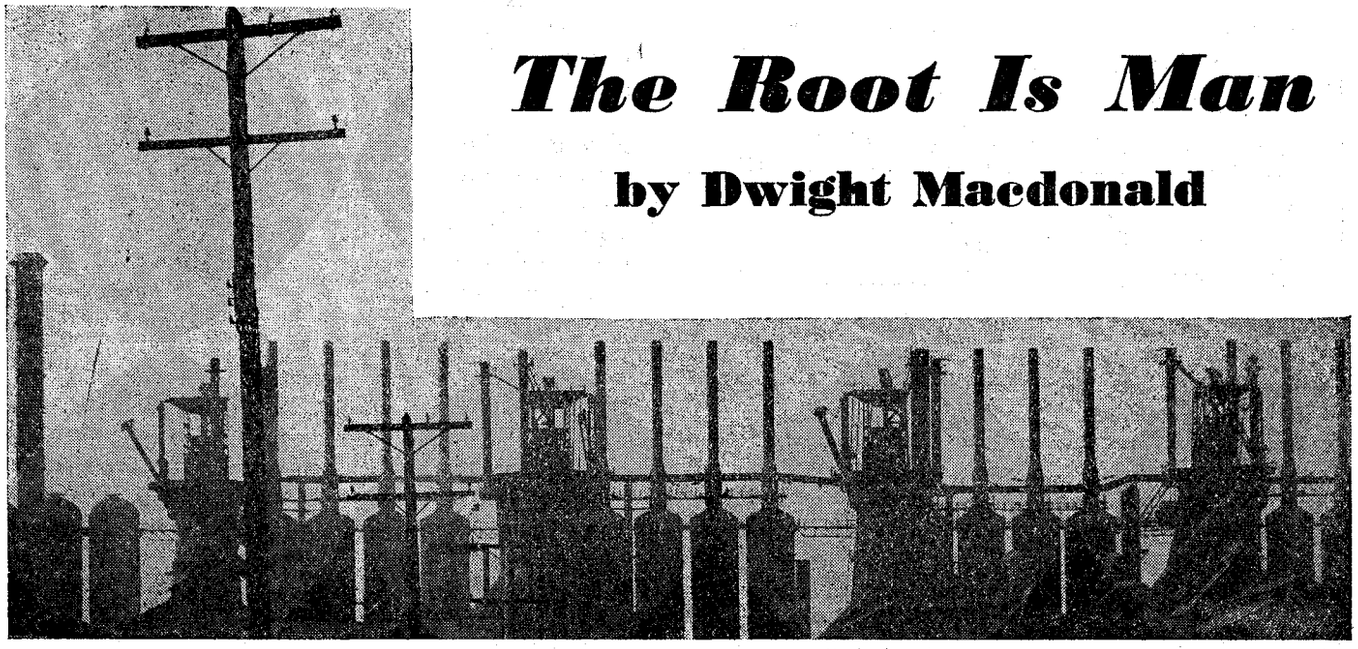

The Root Is Man

by Dwight Macdonald

To be radical is to grasp the matter by its root. Now the root for mankind is man himself.

—*KARL MARX* (1844)

SHORTLY after the second world war began, Trotsky wrote a remarkable article entitled "The USSR in War" (see *The New International*, November 1939). It was an attempt to refute the theory that a new form of society had developed in the Soviet Union, one that was neither capitalist nor socialist ("degenerated workers' state" in Trotsky's phrase) but something quite distinct from either of the two classic Marxist alternatives. This theory of a "third alternative" had been foreshadowed in certain passages of Anton Ciliga's *The Russian Enigma* (Paris, 1938) and had been developed in detail (I am told, for I have never been able to get hold of a copy of the book) by a certain "Bruno R." in *La Bureaucratisation du Monde* (Paris, 1939).* The proponents of the new theory called it "bureaucratic collectivism."

If this theory is correct, the consequences for the Marxist schema are obviously quite serious; and so Trotsky attempted to demonstrate its falsity. His article is remarkable because, with a boldness and a sense of intellectual responsibility not common among present-day Marxists, he ventured to draw the consequences for Marxism if indeed capitalism's heir were to be bureaucratic collectivism. More, he even dared to set a "deadline" for the long-awaited world revolution.

"The second world war has begun," he wrote. "It attests incontrovertibly to the fact that society can no longer live on the basis of capitalism. Thereby it subjects the proletariat to a new and perhaps decisive test.

"If this war provokes, as we firmly believe, a proletarian revolution, it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR and the regeneration of Soviet democracy on a far higher economic and cultural basis than in 1918. In that case, the question as to whether the Stalinist bureaucracy was a 'class' or a parasitic growth on the workers' state will be automatically solved. To every single person it will become clear that in the process of this development of the world revolution, the Soviet bureaucracy was only an episodic relapse.

"If, however, it is conceded that the present war will

*In 1941, James Burnham gave popular currency to the idea in *The Managerial Revolution*. Unfortunately, he vulgarized it so enthusiastically as to make it a source of confusion rather than enlightenment. (See the reviews by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills in *Ethics*, Jan. 1942, and by myself in *Partisan Review*, Jan.-Feb. 1942.)

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provoke not revolution but a decline of the proletariat, then there remains another alternative: the further decay of monopoly capitalism, its further fusion with the State and the replacement of democracy wherever it still persists, by a totalitarian regime. The inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead to the growth of a new exploiting class from the Bonapartist fascist bureaucracy. This would be, according to all indications, a regime of decline, signalizing the eclipse of civilization. . . .

"However onerous the second perspective may be, if the world proletariat should actually prove incapable of fulfilling the mission placed upon it by the course of development, nothing else would remain except openly to recognize that the socialist program based on the internal contradictions of capitalist society ended as a Utopia. It is self-evident that a new minimum program would be required—for the defense of the interests of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society."

The war is now ended, in unparalleled devastation, hunger, misery in Asia and Europe, in the shattering of the old class structure of Europe and the loosening of imperialist bonds in the colonies. Yet no revolution has succeeded anywhere, or even been attempted; the kind of defensive battle the EAM put up in Greece, however heroic, cannot be called a revolution. The "revolutionary opportunities" which we socialists expected to occur after this war have indeed materialized; but the masses have not taken advantage of them. Although the second world war has been far more destructive of the old order than was the first, the level both of mass consciousness and of socialist leadership is far lower than it was in 1917-20. Is it not striking, for example, that the entire European resistance movement has ebbed away without producing a single new political tendency, or a single leader of any stature?

The reasons for this decadence will be considered presently. The fact is what concerns us now. I think it is time for socialists to face the situation that actually exists instead of continuing to fix our eyes on a distant future in which History will bring us at last what we want. It is strange, by the way, that Marxists, who pride themselves on their realism, should habitually regard the Present as merely the mean entrance-hall to the spacious palace of the Future. For the entrance-hall seems to stretch out interminably; it may or may not lead to a palace; meanwhile, it is all the palace we have, and we must live in it. I think we shall live in it better and even find the way to the palace better (if there *is* a palace), if we try living in the present instead of in the Future. To begin with, let us face the fact that Trotsky's deadline is here and that his revolution is not.

The Plan and Purpose of this Article

If, writes Trotsky, the war provokes "not revolution but a decline of the proletariat" and if, consequently, Marxists must recognize that Bureaucratic Collectivism, not Socialism, is the historical successor to Capitalism, then: "nothing else would remain except openly to recognize that the socialist program, based on the internal contradictions of capitalist society, ended as a Utopia."

This seems to me an accurate summary of the dilemma Marxists find themselves in today. For if one bases one's socialist program on capitalist contradictions, and if those contradictions conduct one not to Socialism but to Bureaucratic Collectivism, then one has no real basis for socialism. Also, if one assumes that history has only one possible pattern, predictable in advance if one can discover society's "laws of motion", then the triumph of Bureaucratic Collectivism in Russia and its much greater strength (compared to Socialism) in other parts of the world today—these developments force one to conclude, with Trotsky, that totalitarianism is "the" future alternative to Capitalism. In this case, Trotsky's "minimum program . . . for the defense of the interests of the slaves of totalitarian society" is all that can be logically attempted. Who is going to take any risks for, or even get very interested in such an uninspir-

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ing—however worthy—program, one that by definition can never go further than defense? Do not the Russian and German experiences, in fact, show that such a limited program is quite impossible under totalitarianism—that one must either go much farther, or not stir at all?

But why not, after all, base one's socialism on what Trotsky contemptuously calls "Utopian" aspirations? Why not begin with what we living human beings *want*, what we think and feel is *good?* And then see how we can come closest to it—instead of looking to historical process for a justification of our socialism? It is the purpose of this article to show that a different approach may be made and must be made, one that denies the existence of any such rigid pattern to history as Marxism assumes, one that will start off from one's own personal interests and feelings, working from the individual to society rather than the other way around. Above all, its ethical dynamic comes from absolute and non-historical values, such as Truth and Justice, rather than from the course of history.

The first part, printed here, begins by proposing that the traditional distinction between "Left" and "Right" be replaced by a new "Progressive-Radical" division. ("1. *We Need a New Vocabulary.*") This is followed by "2. *The World We Live In*", which brings together evidence showing the confusion that comes from trying to fit current history into the old "Left-Right" pattern. The remainder of this part is devoted to an attempt to show that Marxism is no longer a reliable guide either to political action or to an understanding of what is happening in the world. The Marxist approach to politics is considered generally in "3. *The Question of Marxism.*" This is followed by three sections on specific aspects of the question: "4. *The Mirage of Proletarian Revolution*"; "5. *The 'Third Alternative': Bureaucratic Collectivism,*"; and "6. *Modern War and the Class Struggle.*"

The second part, which will appear next month, discusses the relationship of scientific method and value judgments, questions that "Idea of Progress" that has been the basis of Leftwing thought for a century and a half, and tries to show why the "Radical" approach to politics is more valid today in both intellectual and ethical terms than the "Progressive" approach, based on scientific method, that is still dominant among socialists.

Finally, it is only fair to say right now that readers who expect either a new theoretical system to replace Marxism or some novel program of action will save themselves disappointment by not reading the article. All I attempt here is to explain, as coherently as possible, why the Marxian approach to socialism no longer satisfies me, and to indicate the general direction in which I think a more fruitful approach may be made. Those looking for either Certainty or Directives will find little to interest them here.

1. We Need a New Political Vocabulary

The first great victory of Bureaucratic Collectivism came in 1928, when Stalin finally drove Trotsky into exile and prepared, the following year, to initiate the First Five Year Plan. Between the French Revolution (1789) and 1928, political tendencies could fairly accurately be divided into "Right" and "Left". But the terms of the struggle for human liberation shifted in 1928—the shift had been in process long before then, of course, but 1928 may be taken as a convenient watershed. It was Trotsky's failure to realize this that gave an increasingly unreal character to his handling of "the Russian question", just as it is the continued blindness of liberals and socialists to this change that makes academic, if not worse, their present-day political behavior.

Let me try to define the 1789-1928 "Left" and "Right."

The Left comprised those who favored a change in social institutions which would make the distribution of income more equal (or completely equal) and would reduce class privileges (or do away with classes altogether). The central intellectual concept was the validity of scientific method; the central moral concept was the dignity of Man and the individual's right to liberty and a full personal development. Society was therefore conceived of as a means to an end: the happiness of the individual. There were important differences in method (as, reform v. revolution, liberalism v. class struggle) but on the above principles the Left was pretty much agreed.

The Right was made up of those who were either satisfied with the status quo (conservatives) or wanted it to become even more inegalitarian (reactionaries). In the name of Authority, the Right resisted change, and in the name of Tradition, it also, logically enough, opposed what had become the cultural motor of change: that willingness, common alike to Bentham and Marx, Jefferson and Kropotkin, to follow scientific inquiry wherever it led and to reshape institutions accordingly. Those of the Right thought in terms of an "organic" society, in which society is the end and the citizen the means. They justified inequalities of income and privilege by alleging an intrinsic inequality of individuals, both as to abilities and human worth.

This great dividing line has become increasingly nebulous with the rise of Nazism and Stalinism, both of which combine Left and Right elements in a bewildering way. Or, put differently, both the old Right and the old Left have almost ceased to exist as historical realities, and their elements have been recombined in the dominant modern tendency: an inegalitarian and organic society in which the citizen is a means, not an end, and whose rulers are anti-traditional and scientifically minded. Change is accepted in principle—indeed, the unpleasant aspects of the present are justified precisely as the price that must be paid to insure a desirable future, whether it be Hitler's domination of lesser races by the Nordics, or Stalin's emancipation of the world workingclass, or our own liblabs' peaceful future world to be achieved through war. The whole idea of historical process, which a century ago was the badge of the Left, has become the most persuasive appeal of the apologists for the status quo.

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In this Left-Right hybrid, the notion of Progress is central. A more accurate terminology might therefore be to reserve the term "Right" for such oldfashioned conservatives as Herbert Hoover and Winston Churchill and to drop the term "Left" entirely, replacing it with two words: "Progressive" and "Radical."

By "Progressive" would be understood those who see the Present as an episode on the road to a better Future; those who think more in terms of historical process than of moral values; those who believe that the main trouble with the world is partly lack of scientific knowledge and partly the failure to apply to human affairs such knowledge as we do have; those who, above all, regard the increase of man's mastery over nature as good in itself and see its use for bad ends, as atomic bombs, as a perversion. This definition, I think, covers fairly well the great bulk of what is still called the Left, from the Communists ("Stalinists") through reformist groups like our own New Dealers, the British Laborites, and the European Socialists, to small revolutionary groups like the Trotskyists.*

"Radical" would apply to the as yet few individuals—mostly anarchists, conscientious objectors, and renegade Marxists like myself—who reject the concept of Progress, who judge things by their present meaning and effect, who think the ability of science to guide us in human affairs has been overrated and who therefore redress the balance by emphasizing the ethical aspect of politics. They, or rather we, think it is an open question whether the increase of man's mastery over nature is good or bad in its actual affects on human life to date, and favor adjusting technology to man, even if it means—as may be the case—a technological regression, rather than adjusting man to technology. We do not, of course, "reject" scientific method, as is often charged, but rather think the scope within which it can yield fruitful results is narrower than is generally assumed today. And we feel that the firmest ground from which to struggle for that human liberation which was the goal of the old Left is the ground not of History but of those non-historical Absolute Values (truth, justice, love, etc.) which Marx has made unfashionable among socialists.

The Progressive makes History the center of his ideology. The Radical puts Man there. The Progressive's attitude is optimistic both about human nature (which he thinks is basically good, hence all that is needed is to change institutions so as to give this goodness a chance to work) and about the possibility of understanding history through scientific method. The Radical is, if not exactly pessimistic, at least more sensitive to the dual nature of man; he sees evil as well as good at the base of human nature; he is sceptical about the ability of science to explain things beyond a certain point; he is aware of the tragic element in man's fate not only today but in any conceivable kind of society. The Progressive thinks in collective terms (the interests of Society or the Workingclass); the Radical stresses the individual conscience and sensibility. The Progressive starts off from what actually is happening; the Radical starts off from what he wants to happen. The former must have the feeling that History is "on his side." The latter goes along the road pointed out by his own individual conscience; if History is going his way, too, he is pleased; but he is quite stubborn about following "what ought to be" rather than "what is."

Because its tragic, ethical and non-scientific emphasis corresponds partly with the old Right attitude, leading to criticisms of Progressive doctrine that often sound very much like those that used to be made from the Right, the Radical viewpoint causes a good deal of confusion today. It is sometimes called "objectively reactionary." It would not be hard, however, to show the peculiar bedfellows, notably the Stalinists, the Progressives have today. For the fact is that *both* the Progressive and the Radical attitudes, as here defined, cut across the old Left-Right dividing line, and in this sense both are confusing and even "objectively reactionary" if one continues to think in the old terms.

Another frequent allegation of the Progressives, especially those of the Marxian persuasion, is that the Radical viewpoint which POLITICS frequently expresses is of necessity a religious one. If by "religious" is simply meant non-materialistic or non-scientific, then this is true. But if God and some kind of otherworldly order of reality is meant, then I don't think it is true. The Radical viewpoint is certainly *compatible* with religion, as Progressivism is not; and such Radicals as D. S. Savage and Will Herberg are religious-minded; but I personally see no necessary connection, nor am I conscious of any particular interest in religion myself.

I might add that the Radical approach, as I understand it at least, does not deny the importance and validity of science in its own proper sphere, or of historical, sociological and economic studies. Nor does it assert that the only reality is the individual and his conscience. It rather defines a sphere which is outside the reach of scientific investigation, and whose value judgements cannot be proved (though they can be demonstrated in appropriate and completely unscientific terms); this is the traditional sphere of art and morality. The Radical sees any movement like socialism which aspires towards an ethically superior kind of society as rooted in that sphere, however its growth may be shaped by historical process. This is the sphere of human, personal interests, and in this sense, the root is man.

The best of the Marxists today see no reason for the dissection of the old Left that is proposed here. They still hold fast to the classic Left faith in human liberation through scientific progress, while admitting that revisions of doctrine and refinements of method are necessary. This was my opinion until I began publishing POLITICS; in "The Future of Democratic Values" (*Partisan Review*, July-August, 1943), I argued that Marxism, as the heir of 18th century liberalism, was the only reliable guide to a democratic future; the experience of editing this magazine, however, and consequently being forced to follow the tragic events of the last two years in some detail, has slowly changed my mind. The difficulties lie much deeper, I now think, than is assumed by Progressives, and the crisis is

* It is not intended to suggest there are not important differences between these tendencies. The Stalinists, in particular, should be most definitely set off from the rest. Their Progressivism is a complete abandonment to the historical process, so that absolutely anything goes, so long as it is in the interests of Russia, a "higher" form of society. The other groups, although they put more emphasis on the historical process than is compatible with the values they profess, do stand by certain general principles and do recognize certain ethical boundaries.

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much more serious. The brutality and irrationality of Western social institutions have reached a pitch which would have seemed incredible a short generation ago; our lives have come to be dominated by warfare of a ferocity and on a scale unprecedented in history; horrors have been committed by the governments of civilized nations which could hardly have been improved on by Attila: the extermination of the Jewish people by the Nazis; the vast forced-labor camps of the Soviet Union; our own saturation bombing of German cities and the "atomization" of the residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is against this background that the present article is written; it is all this which has forced me to question beliefs I have long held.

2. The World We Live In

Let me demonstrate, by reference to recent events in various countries, how confusing the old categories of "Left" and "Right" have become, and how inadequate the Marxian schema. As we shall see, it is not just a matter of the workingclass revolution failing to materialize. The situation is far more complex, and far more discouraging. For the full bitterness of workingclass defeat is realized only in victory, a paradox illustrated in the twenties by the Bolsheviks and the German Social Democracy, and today by the British Labor Party.

The World through Marxist Spectacles

The awkward thing, from a Marxian standpoint, is that if we look at the world in the terms Marxists think are decisive—that of shifts in class power and economic institutions—the outlook is rather promising. Viz.:

¶ All over Europe the old bourgeois parties are much weaker than before the war, where they have not practically disappeared like the Radical Socialists in France. In Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Austria, Italy, and most of the other lesser European countries the two great movements with a Marxian socialist ideology, the Communists and the reformist Socialists, dominate the political scene.

¶ In France, two-thirds of the electorate is represented by the Communists and the Socialists, with the ambiguous "Christian socialist" MRP as the nearest thing left to a bourgeois group. The Bank of France has been nationalized (remember the "200 families"?) and further nationalizations are in prospect.

¶ Great Britain (and the British Empire!) is ruled by a Labor Party based on the trade unions and explicitly socialist in its program; it was elected by a landslide majority last summer and has a constitutional expectation of holding power for the next five years. The Bank of England has been nationalized, and the party is committed to nationalizing steel, coal, power, the railroads and other basic industries.

¶ In the defeated powers, Germany and Japan, the victors are expropriating the former ruling classes to a great degree and breaking down the industrial structure on which that class rule was based; the logic of this forces the victors to tolerate the new growth of unions and leftwing parties which results from this weakening of the big bourgeoisie. (Cf. World War I, where the victors left intact Germany's big capitalism, and in fact covertly supported it as a counterweight to "Bolshevism".)

¶ In Asia, the Chinese Communists retain their strength and are being admitted as a partner with the Kuomintang in a new "liberalized" regime; the Indonesian rebellion seems to be succeeding; the British have been forced by the gathering intensity of revolt in India to make the most definite proposals to date for Indian freedom.

¶ The Soviet Union is still a collective economy; it has emerged as the second most powerful nation in the world, and dominates directly all of Eastern Europe, from the Baltic to the Balkans, a vast area in which its puppet "people's governments" have broken the power of the old bourgeoisie and divided up the big estates among the poor peasants.

¶ The one great power in which the pre-war bourgeois order has survived more or less intact is the USA. Yet even here we see the unions holding much more of their wartime gains than was anticipated and strong enough to force the Federal Government to help them win postwar wage increases. We also see the State continuing to intervene in the economy, and the permanent acceptance, by the courts and by public opinion, of such social measures as the Wagner Act, the Wages & Hours law, Social Security, and Federal unemployment relief. (Cf. the aftermath of World War I: the Palmer "Red raids", industry's successful "Open Shop" campaign against the unions, the complete control of the Government by big business.)

In short, from the standpoint of the kind of institutional changes Marxism stresses, the world should be closer to socialism today than ever before.

The World As It Is

Even to the most mechanical Marxist, the above picture will appear overdrawn. Yet this is the clearly absurd conclusion we reach if we simply follow the Marxist stress on institutional changes. I say "clearly absurd", but the absurdity is apparent only in different degrees to the various groups on the Left: the Stalinists don't see it at all, being almost wholly optimistic now that Russian collectivism is on the ascendant; the liberal weeklies are more sceptical, but on the whole see numerous "encouraging" features in these changes; the Socialists and Trotskyists are the most critical of all, but find consolation in such things as the British Labor Party victory and the strength shown by the CIO in the recent strikes. All of these groups are, in my opinion, too optimistic about the state of the world; and their optimism stems from the fact that they all share a common "progressive" viewpoint inherited mostly from Marx.

Those of us, however, who look at the human content rather than the historical form, who think in terms of values rather than of process, believe that socialism today is farther away than ever. War and the preparation of war has become the normal mode of existence of great nations. There is a general collapse of the old dreams of interna-

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tional brotherhood. Nationalism is constantly becoming more virulent, until even persecuted minorities like the Negroes and Jews are developing, in their despair, chauvinisms of their own. A *sauve-qui-peut* philosophy flourishes everywhere; every one today is a two-bit *realpolitiker*. In this country and abroad, significant sections of the workingclass stood out against World War I, but the British and American labor movements were almost solidly behind World War II. The power of the State has never been greater, the helplessness of the great mass of citizens never more extreme. All these sinister trends find their intense expression in the one great non-capitalist nation, the USSR, where science is worshipped and industrial production is God, where nationalism has reached a paranoiac pitch, where imperialistic policy is more aggressive than anywhere else on earth, where 180 million people live in a combination barracks and munitions plant over which floats the red banner of Marxian revolution.

If the present tendency of history works out its logic unchecked, then in the USSR we have the image of the future society. I do not know of a single party or movement of any size in the world today that is working to check this tendency in the only way I think it can be checked: through changing our present social structure in a libertarian socialist direction.*

Nowhere is there visible a party of any size which even aspires—let alone has the power to do so—to shatter the institutions, beginning with the national State, whose blind workings are bringing on the next war. All we have on the Left is still that banal and hopeless clash of two unsatisfactory alternatives: the totalitarian heirs of Bolshevism, and those sapless sons of ineffectual fathers, the reformist socialists.

The Step that Wasn't There

It will not do to lay the chief blame for this collapse on Stalinist "betrayal" or even on the overwhelming amount of military force in the hands of the Big Three. What has happened is that the traditional aspirations which the dominant Marxian ideology has implanted in the masses of Europe have come to coincide to a dangerous degree with the interests of their rulers, so that the tribunes of the people find themselves in the absurd and demoralizing position of demanding what will be granted anyway. They have no vocabulary with which to ask for the things which are today really in the interests of the oppressed—and which will *not* be granted from above.

The social systems of the victorious powers are developing a common tendency towards a planned, State-controlled economy which considers the citizen a cell in the social organism and thus at once the ward of the State, entitled to a job and to average living standards in exchange for his usefulness in production or the armed forces, and also the State's docile instrument who could no more rebel, than a cell could develop independently of the total organism. If this latter *does* happen, modern political theory agrees with biology in calling the result cancer, which must be cut out lest the organism die. (See section 4 of "The Responsibility of Peoples" in POLITICS for March, 1945, for a discussion of the "Organic State.") The Organic State, furthermore, is directed towards one great end: to assert effectively against competing States its own nationalistic interests, which means preparation for World War III. All this is a matter of common knowledge in upper-class circles in the USA, the USSR and other big powers, although, for obvious reasons, it is not discussed in public.

Now, with such a society developing, what kind of demands do the tribunes of the people put forth today? Do they proclaim a new Rights of Man? Do they turn pacifist, denounce war as the greatest of evils, insist on immediate disarmament, beginning with their own country, expose the fraudulent character of World War II? Do they agitate for greater freedom of the press and opinion? Do they push toward decentralization of industry until its scale become human, regardless of the effects on munitions production? Do they take up arms against the growing power of the State? Do they fight against the growth of nationalism in the name of international fraternity?

These are, of course, rhetorical questions. The reformist movements like the British Labor Party and our own labor unions are apathetic on such issues. The Communists are not apathetic; they are intensely hostile. What kind of aims do both reformists and Communists actually have? They want Full Production, Nationalization, Planning, and above all Security, of both the Social and the National varieties. There is nothing in these demands incompatible with the interest of the ruling class in organizing a strong nation to compete militarily with other nations. There are antagonisms, it is true, sharp and sometimes bloody battles. But these clashes are on secondary issues; they do not affect the trend towards war and social regimentation. For the struggle is not over a new kind of society, but over who is to dominate the existing society, the Old Guard or the Tribunes of the People. It is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish the "Right" from the "Left" wing.

The reason for this confusion is basically simple: the historical process to which the Left has traditionally looked for progress in a desirable direction has been going on but the result is often not progress but the reverse. The liberals put their faith in social and economic reforms; these are being made, but often go hand in hand with moral barbarism. The Marxists looked to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie; this is taking place, but new and in many ways even more oppressive rulers are replacing the old ones. We are all in the position of a man going upstairs who thinks there is another step, and finds there is not. We are off balance. How far may be suggested by some random examples.

¶ The failure of the British Labor Party to behave very differently from the Tories once it got into power has been described in these pages already. (See the September and November, 1945, issues.) One tiny recent news item may be added: "LONDON, March 7: Britain's secret service will cost about $10,000,000 during the coming year, according to government civil estimates published today. This is five times more than was spent in 1939."

¶ Australia has had a 100% Labor government since 1943. All but 3 of the 19 cabinet ministers are former trade union officials. This government carries out a "White Australia" policy, i. e., complete exclusion of all immigrants with

*By "socialism" I mean a classless society in which the State has disappeared, production is cooperative, and no man has political or economic power over another. The touchstone would be the extent to which each individual could develop his own talents and personality.

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brown, black or yellow skins. It also complains that the reactionary General MacArthur is "too soft" on the defeated Japanese people.

¶ The New Zealand government is also completely Labor, has been in office since 1935, and has put through a great deal of very "advanced" social legislation. It also bans all Asiatic immigrants.

¶ In the first issue of POLITICS, I called attention to what I called "the Bolivian Pattern": the putsch by fascist-minded Army officers which overthrew the former conservative regime backed by native big business and the U. S. State Department. The revolutionaries were anti-USA, anti-capitalist . . . and anti-Semitic. When they took power, they shot one of the "big three" tin magnates, passed Bolivia's first laws favoring the exploited Indian tin miners . . . and strengthened the Army. Currently in Argentina we see the pro-Nazi, dictatorial Army boss, Peron, leading a working-class movement against the bourgeoisie, decreeing enormous wage advances, trampling on property rights, and getting himself overwhelmingly elected president in the first honest election in years. The opposing candidate, Tamborini, was backed by Argentine big business, the U.S. State Department . . . and *The Nation*.

¶ A century and a half ago, France gave the world the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Last summer the dying act of the French resistance movement was the fiasco of the "Estates General of the French Renaissance", a convention which rashly challenged comparison with the great Estates General of 1789. Out of it came a "Proclamation and Oath" which merely mentioned in passing "equality of rights for all human beings", devoting itself to the two great themes of modern Progressivism: patriotism and production. Quote: "The independence and prosperity of the nation, the conditions for its power, depend on the unity of all Frenchmen, who must be linked by a common patriotic aspiration. . . . The Estates General proclaim: the people may remain master of their own destiny only if they become mobilized in a patriotic and enthusiastic spirit, making a determined effort to increase production. It is the sacred duty of each man and woman to protest against anything which could impede this effort." This is not the *Comite des Forges* speaking, but the Communists and Socialists. These Leftists have fulfilled their sacred duty by protesting against . . . the freedom of the press. They are the ones who have insisted on making a government license a prerequisite of publication. If they reply that this is to prevent big business and former collaborationists from corrupting the press, one might ask why the Trotskyists have been denied a license, so that their press is still illegal just as it was under the Germans and their followers are arrested, as happened recently, when they try to sell papers on the street.* When the Constituent Assembly opened debate on the preamble to the new Constitution, the *N. Y. Times* reported (March 7): "The discussion appeared confused by reason of the fact that the moderates and members of the reactionary groups seemed to be defending the 'immortal principles' of the 'illustrious ancestors' of 1789, while the extremists of the Left were demanding restrictions on some of those liberties championed for generations by the sons of the revolution." The rewrite job on the Rights of Man, which eliminated free speech and such luxuries, was done by a commission composed only of Communists and Socialists. Copeau, a resistance leader, "asserted that the rights of 1789 were typically bourgeois whereas the situation today required social protection and adaptation to a coming Marxist society." The fight for a free press was led by old Edouard Herriot, leader of the almost defunct bourgeois party, the Radical Socialists, who made an eloquent speech which the Right applauded and the Left heard in disapproving silence.

* Word has just came that the Anarchist press is also still illegal in France.

"Left and "Right" in Two World Wars

It is revealing to compare Left-Right attitudes in World War I with those in World War II.

In World War I, these attitudes were consistent in themselves and cleanly opposed to each other. The Right was chauvinist—after all, as the ruling class, they felt it was *their* country—and favored the war for the simplest, most straightforward economic motives (competition, "merchants of death"—the complete absence of the latter phrase in World War II is significant). The bulk of the Left submitted to the "necessity" of the war, since it was unwilling to take a revolutionary anti-war stand, but its attitude was passive, rather shamefaced. Before the war, the Right was militarist and favored a "forward" foreign policy, while the Left was pacifist and anti-imperialist. After the war, the Right pressed for a Carthaginian peace (or what passed for such in those innocent days) and emphasized the collective responsibility of the German people, while the Left tried to lighten reparations and to limit war guilt to the German ruling classes.

The situation in World War II was much more complex, because in the interim two phenomena had arisen which cut across the old alignments: the bureaucratic-collective dictatorships of Hitler and Stalin. The Franco-Anglo-American bourgeoisie had seen the Kaiser's Germany as simply an imperialist competitor, but towards Hitler they had an ambivalent attitude. Insofar as he was a powerful competitor, they opposed him, but they supported him insofar as he had created an "orderly" society by liquidating his own Left and insofar as he seemed to be preparing war against the USSR. Through Munich, indeed right up to Hitler's attack on Poland and in some cases even later, the Right saw Hitler mainly as an ally against the Left, specifically against the USSR. They put up with his aggressions, therefore, and failed to arm against him. On the other hand, they didn't trust him enough to join him in a war against Russia, as the Marxists (and Hitler) had supposed they would. They correctly saw that Nazism was something new (and dangerous to them), not just an extreme form of monopoly capitalism. So they were unable to act at all. The Left was also paralyzed by the cross-currents set up by these new phenomena which didn't fit into the old Left-Right pattern. On the one hand, it opposed Hitler for the same reasons the Right favored him, and demanded "collective security" and a firm stand against Nazi aggression. At the same time, the disillusionment with World War I was still strong enough to make its *general* feeling about war negative; also, its whole tradition was anti-war.

When war came—after Stalin's pact with Hitler had shown the political ambiguity of these new societies—it was

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the traditionally war-hating Left which was enthusiastic about the war, while the traditionally bellicose Right went into it with much the same reluctance the Left had shown in World War I, and for much the same reasons: they could see no way to avoid it, and yet they felt that their class interests would not be advanced by it. The Left, furthermore, was able to prosecute the war more effectively because the high degree of State control a modern war necessitates fitted in better with its ideology. So in this country, we see the Left, which in the early thirties had applauded the Nye Committee's exposure of the "merchants of death", becoming increasingly belligerent after Roosevelt's Chicago speech (1937), while the Republican Right was almost solidly isolationist. The British Tories were the architects of Munich; it took the collaboration of the Labor Party to put any real vigor and heart into the British war effort. In France, the contrast was even sharper. "Between the years 1933 and 1938," writes Charles Micaud in his recent study, *The French Right and Nazi Germany*, "there took place a complete change in the foreign policy of the majority of the Right as well as in that of the Left: the nationalist Right began to preach pacifism, and the pacifist Left to urge Resistance. 'The reversal of these attitudes,' wrote M. Pierre Brossolete in *L'Europe Nouvelle* shortly before Munich, 'has been of a prodigious suddenness. . . . And so it is today one can see the most serious organs of the Right speak of a "Leftist bellicism", while the Left returns to the Right their old accusation of being "in the service of Germany".'"

The same reversal may be observed in our own postwar policies. The Right favors a relatively "soft peace", partly because it never believed in the war as an antifascist crusade, and partly because it hopes to make Germany a barrier to Russian advance; while the Left insists on the collective responsibility of the German people and presses for vengeance. The CIO, like the British TUC, has put on record its belief in the war guilt of the German *people*. It is Rightists like President Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, and Senator Wheeler, who express indignation at the extremes to which the victors are going in Germany; the Rightist Republican Senator Wherry makes speeches about our policy of starving Europe, especially Germany, which read like editorials from this magazine. It is the liberal Senator Kilgore who defends the use of German slave labor, and it is Mrs. Roosevelt who praises Louis Nizer's racial tirade against Germans and minimizes the current starvation in Germany. The actual proposals for postwar Germany of the reactionary German-baiter, Vansittart, are positively humane compared with these of the New Dealer, Morgenthau (who recently joined the committee to feed the General Motors strikers), while the Leftist paper, *P.M.*, has far outstripped the Hearst press in its hate-the-Germans-and-Japs campaign. On the issue of peacetime conscription, it is the Right Republican Senator Taft who leads the fight against it, and the Republican floor leader in the House, Martin, who proposes an international agreement to abolish conscription everywhere; while the New Dealers, led by first Roosevelt and now Truman, line up behind the General Staff in favor of conscription.

3. The Question of Marxism

It is notable that all the articles in this series have been largely concerned with Marxism; that this concern is hostile does not alter the fact that it exists. Now when the contributors to a series entitled "New Roads in Politics" devote most of their attention to the ideas of a man who died in 1883, we may infer either that they are unimaginative plodders along *old* roads or else that Marxism is really a serious obstacle to a new road. As the instigator of the series, I naturally incline to the second inference. But I think its validity can be demonstrated.

Both in culture and in politics, Marxism today exercises an extraordinary influence. In the "social sciences", the historical-materialist approach first developed by Marx is widely accepted. (See, for example, my note on "The Revival of Political Economy", in POLITICS for March 1944.) Many workers in these fields who would be horrified at the idea of being Marxists nonetheless think in the tradition he established—filtered down (and watered down) through more "respectable" thinkers, as, for example, Weber and Mannheim in sociology. As for the influence of Marxism in world politics today, I have already tried to show that in detail.

This strange flickering-up of Marxist concepts, at a time when Marx's ethical aims are in ashes, is the afterglow of a great historical period that is going down in darkness. Marxism is the most profound expression of what has been the dominant theme in Western culture since the 18th century: the belief that the advance of science, with the resulting increase of man's mastery over nature, is the climax of a historical pattern of Progress. If we have come to question this pattern, before we can find any *new* roads, we must first reject the magnificent system which Marx elaborated on its basis. A break with a whole cultural tradition is involved, and Marxism looms up as the last and greatest systematic defense of that tradition. We who reject Marxism are indebted to Marx for the very fact that the boldness and intellectual grandeur of his work makes it possible for us to formulate more clearly our own position in the process of distinguishing it from his; this is the service which any great thinker renders to his critics. I know of no better way to come to the heart of our modern dilemma than by showing the defects of the Marxian solution.

The Ambiguity of Marxism

Marxism is not simply, or even primarily, an interpretation of history. It is a guide to political action. The worst fate that can befall a philosophy of action is for it to become ambiguous. This is what has happened to Marxism. Its ambiguity stems from the fact that Marx's ethical aims have not been realized—quite the contrary!—while the historical process by which he thought they would be realized has to a large extent worked out as he predicted it would.

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It is possible to reach opposite conclusions, on the basis of Marxism, about Soviet Russia, depending on whether one emphasizes Marx's ethical values or his idea of the historical process. Since Marx himself made the process significant rather than the values, the Stalinists would seem to have a somewhat better claim to being the "real" Marxists than their more ethically-minded opponents. But the point is not which is "really" the Marxist view; the point is that each view may be maintained, on the basis of Marx's thought, with a good deal of reason. There is an ambiguity here, fatal to a philosophy which is to be taken as a basis for action, which was not apparent during Marx's lifetime, when history seemed to be going his way, but which is all too clear now that history is going contrary to socialist values.

What Marx Wanted

Marx's vision of a good society was essentially the same as that of the anarchists, the Utopian socialists, and the great 18th century liberals—also as that of those today whom I call "Radicals." The same theme runs through his writings from beginning to end. The *Communist Manifesto* (1848): "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." *Capital,* Vol. 1 (1867): "a society in which the full and free development of every individual becomes the ruling principle . . . . production by freely associated men." The *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) gives us the most explicit and famous formulation:

"In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor, from a means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

The political seal of this future society would be the elimination of all forms of coercion, i. e., the withering away of the State. Some critics of Marx, in particular certain anarchists whose sectarian intemperance matches that of certain Marxists, make him out an ideological apologist for the State. There is indeed a potential towards Statism in Marxism, but it lies not in Marx's values, but, as I shall show presently, in his "historical" method of thinking about those values. From the splendid polemic against Hegel's *Philosophy of Law* in 1844 to the Gotha Critique thirty years later, Marx consistently criticised Statism from the standpoint of human liberation. As a moralist, Marx viewed the individual as the End and society as the Means.

How He Thought it Would Come About

So much for Marx's ethical aims. I think it needs no demonstration that such a society is farther off today than it was in Marx's time. Now what about the way Marx conceived the historical process that would realize these aims? Two passages will give us the grand outlines:

"At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production, these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. . . . In broad outline we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois methods of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from conditions surrounding the life of individuals in society. At the same time, the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation constitutes, therefore, the closing chapter of the prehistoric stage of human society." (*Marx's Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy"*).

"Along with the constantly diminishing number of magnates of capital . . . grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the workingclass, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production. . . . Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated. . . . The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labor, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process incomparably more protracted, violent and difficult than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialised production, into socialised property. In the former case, we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of people." (*"Capital", Vol. I.*)

How It Really Is Coming About

Two aspects of these passages concern us here: (1) the assumption that there is a progressive evolution in history from worse to better; (2) the description of how the overthrow of capitalism, the final step in this evolution, would come about.

(1) The belief in Progress is central to Marx's thought, although his more sophisticated followers today, for understandable reasons, say as little as possible about it. In the section below on Bureaucratic Collectivism I try to show that the concept of Progress is false as a scientific observation. The second part of this article, next month, will consider the ethical and intellectual drawbacks of the theory of progress.

(2) Marx predicted that the contradiction between the increasing productivity of industry and the forms of private property would "burst asunder" the capitalist "integument" and lead to "socialised property." The agency that would

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accomplish this change would be the proletariat, lashed to the task by increasing misery and historically fitted for it by the fact that collectivism was to its interest as a class (and, so far as Marx ever states, to the interest of no other class). The result of the change would be a non-antagonistic form of social production in which, for the first time in history, the masses would expropriate "a few usurpers" instead of the other way around. As we have seen already in this article, private capitalism is indeed decaying and the bourgeoisie are being expropriated, but the agency is not the proletariat but rather a new bureaucratic ruling-class which is substituting its rule for the old ruling-class in the time-honored way. The process on which Marx banked so heavily is being brought about from the top, not the bottom, and is directed towards nationalism and war. The result is not the liberation of the masses but their even more complete enslavement not the coming of the Kingdom of Freedom but the creation of an even more crushing Kingdom of Necessity. The external process is working out, but the inner spirit is the reverse of what Marx expected. The operation is a success, but the patient is dying.

The weakness of Marxism seems to me to be precisely its most distinctive contribution to socialist thinking: the expectation that external, materialistic factors (such as changes in class and property relationships) will bring about certain desired results with "iron necessity." Ends, values cannot safely be treated only as functions of materialistic factors but must be defined and communicated in their own terms. Even that concept of change, the essence of his dialectical method, which Marx thought was intrinsically progressive, has become ambiguous. One is attracted to his "critical and revolutionary" spirit which "lets nothing impose on it"—and yet one cannot but recall that the Nazis were revolutionaries in their own way, who considered nothing sacrosanct, who let nothing impose on them, and whose only principle was a willingness to change anything at any time. This problem of how one roots one's values, which will be treated more extensively later on, seems to me to be the heart of "the question of Marxism."

The Rock that Turned out to be Sand

When Marx concentrated his great intellectual powers on the economic process of capitalism, he thought he was building on a rock. In the preface to *Capital* he quotes approvingly from a Russian review: "The one thing which is of moment to Marx is to find the law of the phenomena with whose investigation he is concerned. . . . This law once discovered, he investigates in detail the effects in which it manifests itself in social life. Consequently, Marx only troubles himself about one thing: to show, by rigid scientific investigation, the necessity of successive determinate orders of social conditions. . . . Marx treats the social movement as a process of natural history, governed by laws not only independent of human will, consciousness and intelligence, but rather on the contrary, determining that will, consciousness and intelligence. . . . The scientific value of such an inquiry lies in the disclosing of the special laws that regulate the origin, existence, development and death of a given social organism and its replacement by another and higher one." The optimism of the 19th century both about Progress and about the possibilities of scientific inquiry, is strikingly expressed here. Also the influence of Darwin's evolutionary theory on Marx, with its reinforcement of the idea of Progress that had arisen in the 18th century and its emphasis on external environmental factors over human consciousness. In the same preface, Marx grandiosely writes of "the natural laws of capitalist production . . . working with iron necessity towards inevitable results." The necessity has proved to be putty, the results quite evitable. The rock of Historical Process on which Marx built his house has turned out to be sand.

It is sometimes said in defense of Marx on this point that he did not predict the inevitable victory of socialism but rather said that the choice before mankind was either socialism or barbarism; and that today we are getting the latter. But what did "barbarism" mean to Marx? From the context of his whole thought, I venture to say it meant disorganization, chaos, a regression in the scientific-technological sphere—the sort of thing that took place after the fall of the Roman Empire. But what we see today is just the opposite: it is the very triumph of the scientific organization of matter (and of men) that is the root of our trouble; and the greatest triumph of applied science in generations, the splitting of the atom, may bring us to utter destruction. Nor is there anything chaotic or disorganized about Soviet Russia, where ethical barbarism is nonetheless at its height.

How unlikely, furthermore, this alternative of "barbarism" appeared to be to Marx and Engels is evident in the slight attention they gave it. They threw it in, perhaps from scientific caution, perhaps to heighten the attractiveness of socialism, but they never bothered to define it, and it runs counter to the general optimistic spirit of their work. Marx spent most of his life investigating the "laws of motion" of capitalism; this investment was justified by his assumption that if he could show, as he did, that these were working to destroy capitalism, he had also demonstrated the "iron necessity" of socialism.

In the following three sections, I try to show that (1) the workingclass has "come of age" without advancing us towards socialism; (2) a great shift away from capitalism is taking place without advancing us towards socialism; (3) modern war, far from offering "revolutionary opportunities" for socialism, is creating new conditions which make the struggle for socialism even more difficult. This failure of history to take the anticipated course might not be fatal to some systems of political thought but it is so to Marxism, because that system is built not on ethical principles but on the historical process itself.

4. The Mirage of the Proletarian Revolution

It was to the workingclass that Marx looked to bring in a better society. And it is in that direction that his followers today still look, as a glance at the minute coverage of labor news in almost any Marxist organ will show. I think it is time for us to recognize that, although the workingclass is certainly *an* element in any reconstitution of

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society along more tolerable lines, it is not now, and possibly never was, *the* element Marx thought it was. The evidence for this is familiar, and most Marxists will admit almost every item in detail. They shrink, however, and understandably enough, from drawing the logical but unpleasant conclusions that follow.

In my opinion, the weight that Marx attached to the proletariat was excessive *economically* in that the organization of the workers into unions has failed to develop into the broader kind of action Marx expected it to. And it was excessive *politically* in that neither the reformist nor the Bolshevik tactic has led to the hoped-for results.

Economic: the Unions

In the resolution on trade unions he drew up for the Geneva conference (1866) of the First International, Marx wrote that "while the immediate object" of trade unions is "confined to everyday necessities . . . to questions of wages and time of labor", they must also broaden their objectives and "convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions." For, he continued: "If the trade unions are required for the guerilla fights between capital and labor, they are still more important as organized agencies for superseding the very system of wage labor. . . . They must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the workingclass in the broad interest of its complete emancipation." Engels wrote to Bebel in similar strain (March 18, 1875), describing the trade union as "the real organization of the proletariat, in which it carries on its daily struggles with capital, in which it trains itself, and which nowadays even amid the worst reaction—as in Paris at the present—can simply no longer be smashed."

Engels was partially right: unions can no longer be "simply" smashed; they tend, indeed, to become ever stronger as capitalism matures. But this increasing strength has not led in any way to the "emancipation of the downtrodden millions." In England the "new unionism" which began with the great dock strikes of 1889 led by socialists like Tom Mann and John Burns, and which the aged Engels hopefully saluted in the preface to the 1892 edition of *The Condition of the British Workingclass in* 1844—this movement towards industrial unionism of the most oppressed parts of the British proletariat laid the foundations for . . . the British Labor Party. In Germany, the debacle of the mighty Social-Democratic trade union movement, on which Marx and Engels placed their main hope for socialist leadership, hardly needs underlining here. Nor is it necessary to elaborate on the evolution—devolution, rather—of our own CIO, which ten years ago unionized the millions of industrial workers who form the backbone of the American workingclass, and which in that short space of time has recapitulated the history of European trade unionism, from rebellious youth to bureaucratic maturity. The recent nationwide CIO strikes, as I pointed out last issue, show how stable these unions have become, and how devoid of socialist meaning.

Instead of broadening their objectives, as Marx expected them to, and aspiring finally to "the emancipation of the downtrodden millions", unions have usually followed precisely the opposite course. At least, in the three instances cited above, it is striking how in each case the early struggle to establish unions had an anti-capitalist character which more and more disappeared as time went on. The evolution has been at first into simple pressure groups fighting for labor's interests *against* the rest of society (which does not by any means consist only of bankers in silk hats) and with an attitude of devil take the hindmost so long as "we get ours"; Lewis' United Mine Workers and the old-line A.F. of L. unions are still in this stage. There is also a later stage, more typical of mature capitalism, which indeed involves the assumption of a broad social responsibility, but as an integral part of capitalism rather than as a force for labor's emancipation *from* capitalism. Industrialists often find it advantageous to have their work force controlled by a "responsible" union bureaucracy with whom they can deal on a "reasonable" basis—in England, for example, the employer himself often makes union membership a condition of employment. The State also finds unions of great value as agencies of control, especially in wartime. In short, the modern union is a bureaucratized mass-organization which simply extends the conventional patterns of society into the workingclass and has little significance as an expression of a specific workingclass consciousness. It may be a narrowminded economic pressure-group, or, more typically, the kind of a prop to a disintegrating status quo the Social Democracy was in Weimar Germany and the T.U.C. is today in somewhat similar circumstances in England. In either case, what it has to do with either socialism or revolution is obscure.

Political: the Parties

The most obvious fact about the Proletarian Revolution is that it has never occurred. Such revolutions as have taken place have not followed the workingclass pattern which Marxism anticipates. The Paris Commune had a very mixed class character and materialized as much along the lines of Blanqui or Proudhon as of Marx. The other revolutionary upheavals have been in the least advanced, not the most advanced, countries, and have therefore had a mixed peasant-worker character (Russia, China, Spain). These revolutions in backward lands have either failed or have produced new tyrannies; the Marxist explanation is that the low level of economic development made socialism impossible. But when countries are highly developed, their workers don't make revolutions at all.

The proletarian revolution today is even less of a historical possibility than it was in 1900. The first world war was the turning point. The reformist-socialist movements of Europe, by supporting their capitalist governments in that war, permanently discredited the Second International. It looked for a time as though the situation had been saved by the revolutionary wing of Marxism, as represented by the Bolsheviks. Lenin had at least understood that the workingclass by itself could develop no further than trade-union consciousness; this was, as has been pointed out by Helen Constas—and before her by Max Eastman in his *Marx, Lenin and the Science of Revolution* (1925)—a basic revision of Marx. The early years of the Russian revolution were in many ways inspiring. But the revolution failed to spread to more advanced countries, and the dangers of bureaucracy and dictatorship which Marxian critics of Leninism like Rosa Luxembourg and Otto Ruhle had correctly predicted as a consequence of the "revolutionary elite"

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theory by which Lenin had tried to repair the defect in Marx's idea of the workingclass—these became more and more dominant.

In 1928, Stalin signalized his complete victory over Trotsky by exiling the latter. The failure turned out to have been merely delayed; and when it came, it was much worse than the reformist failure. The existence of the Soviet Union is today the worst threat to socialism and the most confusing factor in any attempts at advance, because Stalinism is not only a much stronger and more ruthless and determined enemy than the Second International reformists ever were, but it is also thought by millions of workers and sincere socialists to be not a foe but a friend. This ambiguity is its most dangerous feature.

Our Own Experience in America

For the last thirty years, socialism in America has been an "as if" movement; we middleclass intellectuals who have comprised its main body of adherents have generally behaved "as if" our movement were a historical reality. It has not been anything of the sort since 1918; that is, socialism of any variety has not in that period influenced the behavior of a historically significant number of Americans; even the Communists, despite the material and psychological help of their success in Russia, have never played the role in the trade union movement or in national politics which the pre-war radical groups played. After the first world war, American Radicalism lost its mass roots. This fact should always be kept in mind in evaluating the American leftist movement; it explains many things. (Recent letters from our own European readers, for example, assume that POLITICS is the expression of some kind of leftwing movement in America, or at least that it is something more than a handful of individual writers communicating with five or six thousand individual readers. In Europe such a magazine probably would be "something more". In this country—as yet anyway—it is not.)

Between the Civil War and World War I, there arose various mass movements in America based on the perspective of fundamental social change: the Knights of Labor, the IWW, the Socialist party of Debs. In 1910, for example, the Socialist Party had 58,000 dues-paying members, 29 English and 22 foreign-language weeklies, and 3 English and 6 foreign-language *dailies*. By 1912, the party membership was 126,000; Debs got almost a million votes that year for President of the USA; such powerful unions as the United Mine Workers were predominantly socialist, and at that year's A.F. of L. convention the Socialist candidate, running against Gompers for the presidency, got over one-third of the votes. (Walter Lippmann in 1913 was not only a Socialist, but a leftwing Socialist who protested the party's expulsion of Big Bill Haywood for preaching class-war violence.) In the last American presidential election, the Socialist candidate got less votes than there were dues-paying party members in 1910. The Wobblies (IWW) have been even more completely eclipsed: before World War I, they were a major force in American labor, leading strikes involving hundreds of thousands of industrial workers, preaching (and practicing) an uncompromising class-war doctrine based on a libertarian, practically anarchist, philosophy. Today they are almost extinct. I cannot here go into the reasons for this depressing evolution—though it is interesting to note, in connection with the section of this article devoted to the question of war, that the first world war unquestionably was the greatest factor. American radicalism was making great strides right up to 1914; the war was the rock on which it shattered.

The same pattern is found in the history of American trade unionism. Gompers and all of his associates in founding the A. F. of L. were Marxists, and many of them were active members of the First International. In his autobiography, Gompers writes, "In the early seventies, New York City looked like Paris during the Commune." He describes the seething mass of Garibaldi redshirts, Irish home-rulers, German "forty-eighters", Russian and Austrian revolutionaries who made New York "the cradle of the modern American labor movement." When Gompers went to Ferdinand Laurrell, the "mental guide through many of my early struggles" to whom he dedicates his book, and asked for "something fundamental, something upon which one could base a constructive program", he was given . . . the Communist Manifesto. "That document brought me an interpretation of much that before had been only inarticulate feeling. This insight into a hidden world of thought aroused me to master the German language in order that I might read for myself. . . . I read all the German economic literature that I could lay my hands on—Marx, Engels, Lassalle and the others. . . ." Marxism was the theoretical base on which Gompers and his friends founded the A.F. of L. Their main objection to the Knights of Labor was its amorphous class character and its lack of a specifically workingclass program.*

The first step towards the A.F. of L. was taken in 1875 when the Gompers group circulated a call to a conference of trade unionists. This letter begins: "Throughout the United States, there exist numerous organized bodies of workingmen who declare that the present degraded dependence of the workingman upon the capitalist for the means of livelihood is the cause of the greater part of the intellectual, moral and economic degradation that afflicts society, that every political movement must be subordinate to the first great social end, viz., the economic emancipation of the workingclass." And the preamble to the constitution which the A.F. of L. adopted ten years later—and which is still its official program—begins with an echo of the thunder of the Communist Manifesto: "A struggle is going on in all the nations of the civilized world between the oppressors and the oppressed . . . the capitalist and the laborer."

Compare the preamble to the constitution of an exceptionally militant and progressive present-day union, the United Automobile Workers. This begins not with an echo of the Communist Manifesto but with a literal reproduction of . . . the Declaration of Independence—self-evident truths, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and all the rest. But even the 1776 brand of radicalism is too strong for

*Considering the later development of Gompers and the labor movement he founded, this original Marxism has a double meaning to the modern observer: it suggests not only the radicalism of the youthful Gompers but also the ambiguity of Marxism as a guide towards socialism; for although Gompers discarded the socialist aims of Marxism, he never gave up what Marx himself always emphasized as the road to those aims: the struggle for the specific class interests of labor. His dedicating his life-story to the Marxist, Laurrell, and the way he describes his early Marxist leanings show that Gompers himself was unaware of any basic change in his philosophy.

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these modern proletarians: they include the statement about governments "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed", but they omit the rest of the sentence, which declares that the people have a right to overthrow a government if they don't like it. The builders of the new Jefferson Memorial in Washington made precisely the same excision when they cut this quotation into the marble wall of that pompous edifie. But the auto workers go them one better: they actually substitute for Jefferson's subversive idea, the following: "Within the orderly processes of such Government lies the hope of the worker." The rest of their Preamble is in the same spirit. Far from unions being called on to change society, the growth of unionism itself is presented as evidence of such a change *already accomplished!* ("We believe the right of the workers to organize for mutual protection is . . . evidence . . . of an economic and social change in our civilization.") These proletarians roar gently as any sucking dove. They have nothing against capitalism or the wage system; all they want is "a mutually satisfactory and beneficial employer-employee relationship" and "a place at the conference table, together with management." And this is in many ways the most class-conscious union in the country!

"The grandiose economic crisis, acquiring the character of a social crisis," wrote Trotsky in 1931, "will inevitably become transformed into the crisis of the political consciousness of the American workingclass." Fifteen years later, some 150,000 American proletarians, each carrying a union card, labored for many months on an unknown product in the plants of the "Manhattan District" project. When the first atomic bombing revealed to them what they had been making, they reacted with patriotic cheers. There may have been other reactions, but I have seen no reports of them. Furthermore, the petty-bourgeois scientists who developed The Bomb have expressed the utmost concern over the effects of their creation—forming associations, issuing statements, proposing various policies, trying to arouse the public. But I have seen not a single protest, recommendation, or any other expression from the union locals that worked on The Bomb.

5. Bureaucratic Collectivism: the "Third Alternative"

A form of society has come into being which is not Socialist but rather an even more oppressive form of class society than Capitalism, and yet which has resolved those economic contradictions on which Marx based his expectation of progress to socialism. It is a "third alternative" to both capitalism and socialism. So far we have had two examples, one in a backward country (Russia under Stalin), the other in the most advanced nation of Europe (Nazi Germany after 1936). Tendencies in the same direction, which may be called "Bureaucratic Collectivism", have been growing in other nations: the Keynesian economic policies of the New Deal, the postwar nationalization trend in England and on the continent. The dominance of war and the preparation for war in the last decade, and the continuance of this pattern as the tension between the Russian and the Anglo-American bloc grows—these factors stimulate Bureaucratic Collectivist tendencies. For if Capitalism was primarily a new method of producing and distributing the products of industry, Bureaucratic Collectivism might be regarded as a new method of organizing national resources—human, cultural, economic—for effective warmaking. Since I do not see in history the dialectical progressive pattern Marx found there, and so can see a number of *possible* alternatives at any given point in history, Bureaucratic Collectivism does not appear to me (as it does to Marxists and to Marxists-turned-inside-out like Burnham) *the* sole and inevitable successor to capitalism. Libertarian socialism may be another alternative at certain times and places under certain conditions. Therefore, I do not draw the hopeless conclusion Trotsky, for instance, does as to the future if Bureaucratic Collectivism is historically "viable." All that one can say at present, and it is not precisely cheerful, is that Socialism has not materialized and Bureaucratic Collectivism has.

Since I have already written at length on Bureaucratic Collectivism, I shall not recapitulate it all here. My ideas on this subject (at least) have not changed greatly. The interested reader is referred to "The End of Capitalism in Germany" (*Partisan Review*, May-June 1941), "Wallace and the Labor Draft" (POLITICS, February 1945), and "Labor Imperialism" (POLITICS, September 1945). Here, I shall take the liberty of drawing largely on two other old articles of mine which get at the heart of the question. The first is an analysis of Nazi economics designed to show the main lines of difference between Bureaucratic Collectivism and Capitalism (taken from "What Is the Fascist State?"; *The New International*, February 1941). The second is an application of the concept to perhaps the most important question confronting socialists today: the nature of the Soviet Union (taken from "Why 'Politics'?"; POLITICS, February 1944).

What Is Capitalism?

The feature which distinguishes capitalism from all other systems of property relations is production for profit, which means the regulation of production by the market. It is the destruction of the capitalist market that decisively marks fascism as a new and different system.

In his introduction to the *Living Thoughts of Karl Marx* volume, Trotsky writes (emphasis mine throughout):

"In contemporary society, man's cardinal tie is exchange. Any product of labor that enters into the process of exchange becomes a commodity. Marx began his investigation with the commodity and deduced from that fundamental cell of capitalist society those social relations that have objectively shaped themselves on the basis of exchange, *independently of man's will.* Only by pursuing this course is it possible to solve the fundamental puzzle—how in capitalist society, *in which each man thinks for himself and no one thinks for all,* are created the relative proportions of the various branches of economy indispensable to life.

"The worker sells his labor power, the farmer takes his produce to market, the money lender or banker grants loans, the storekeeper offers an assortment of merchandise, the in-

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dustrialist builds a plant, the speculator buys and sells stocks and bonds—*each having his own considerations, his own private plans*, his own concern about wages or profit. Nevertheless, out of this chaos of individual strivings and actions emerges a certain economic whole, which, true, is not harmonious but contradictory, yet does give society the possibility not merely to exist but even to develop. This means that, after all, chaos is not chaos at all, that in some way it is *regulated automatically, if not consciously*. . . . By accepting and rejecting commodities, the market, as the arena of exchange, decides whether they do or do not contain within themselves socially necessary labor, thereby determines the ratios of various kinds of commodities necessary for society. . . ."

This seems to me a reasonably accurate description of how capitalism works. There are two main elements: (1) production is regulated by exchange, that is, by the prospects of the individual and corporate property owners making a profit by selling their goods on the market; (2) this market regulates "not consciously" but as an impersonal, autonomous mechanism working "independent of man's will." *

In Germany today the market still exists, but it has lost its autonomy: it does not determine production, but is used merely as a means of measuring and expressing in economic terms the production which is planned and controlled by the Nazi bureaucracy. The old capitalist *forms* exist, but they express an entirely new content.** Since 1936, production in Germany has not been determined by the market but by the needs of *Wehrwirtschaft*: guns, tanks, shoes, steel, cement are produced in greater or lesser quantities not because there is more or less prospect of making profits on this or that commodity, but because this or that is considered more or less useful for making war. *Economically*, this is production for use, the use being, of course, a highly undesirable one from the *social* point of view.. Nor is this production controlled by a market mechanism working "independent of man's will" but by a bureaucratic apparatus which *plans* production (as against the well-known "anarchy" of capitalist production) and which consciously and wilfully works out the best solution to the particular problem. No individual producer thinks "for himself"; on the contrary, if not one man, at least a small group of top bureaucrats, "think for all."

Commodities Lose Their Mystery

The two great riddles which Marx so brilliantly solved—the nature of commodity production and the process of extracting surplus value—seem to lose, in a fascist economy, most of the subtle mystery which cloaks them under capitalism.

"The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails," begins *Capital*, "presents itself as 'an immense accumulation of commodities,' its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity." What is a commodity? It is, says Marx, "a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties." The reason for this mystery is the dual nature of commodities: they are "both objects of utility and, at the same time, depositories of value," that is, they exist as both "use values" and "exchange values." It is the latter which gives them their capitalist character, and Marx describes how these "exchange values" are realized through the market (emphasis mine):

"As a general rule, articles of utility become commodities only because they are products of the labor of private individuals or groups of individuals who carry on their work *independently of each other*. The sum total of the labor of all these private individuals forms the aggregate labor of society. *Since the producers do not come into social contact with each other until they exchange their products, the specific social character of each producer's labor does not show itself except in the act of exchange.*"

When a state bureaucracy displaces the market as the regulator of production, the individual producers come into social contact with each other in the sphere of production, that is, they produce according to a conscious, prearranged plan, so that it would be technically possible—however politically inadvisable—for each individual producer to know *before he begins to produce* just where his own contribution fits into the general scheme.

A page or two later, Marx writes:

"The categories of bourgeois economy consist of such like forms. [He has been describing the forms in which capitalist value is expressed.] They are forms of thought expressing with social validity the conditions and relations of a definite, historically determined mode of production, *viz.*, the production of commodities. The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labor as long as they take the form of commodities, vanishes therefore, so soon as we come to other forms of production."

Today we may see in Germany what Marx meant: "the whole mystery of commodities" has indeed vanished there. Steel is produced there for use, in guns, in tanks, in ships. Shoes are produced for use, on feet. The fact that the shortage of shoes (in itself produced by state planning) would have made the building of new shoe plants extremely profitable in the last few years meant nothing to the bureaucracy. That was a "theological nicety" they disregarded in the interests of *Wehrwirtschaft*. One secret of the superior effectiveness of the Nazi war economy as compared to the British or French is this directness of its approach, this freedom to plan for use without bothering about the mysteries of the market.

Labor's Fetters Become Visible

So, too, with the other great mystery of the capitalist mode of production: the extraction of surplus value. There

* Compare with Trotsky's description of capitalism, the definition of fascist economy recently given by Otto Dietrich, Nazi press chief: "Economic society is not a mechanism regulating itself automatically. . . . It is an organism that is regulated and directed from one central point."

** Those Marxists who insist that the persistence of these forms—profits, wages, prices, *etc.*—proves that the German economy is still capitalist should remember that in the Soviet Union these forms also largely exist. The Soviet state trusts keep books in capitalist style and if they don't show profits, the managers are liquidated; the workers are paid wages in rubles and spend them in shops on food, clothing, *etc.*; there is even a budding rentier class, living on the proceeds of investments in 6% government bonds. But most of us would agree that this is not a capitalist economy, that its contradictions are not those of capitalism but of quite another kind. (Speaking of forms, note that formally Germany is still a republic: the Weimar Constitution is still formally intact, and Hitler rules merely by virtue of certain extraordinary emergency powers granted him quite legally under the Constitution.)

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has unquestionably been an intensive exploitation of labor under the Nazi régime, expressing itself in the lengthened working hours and lowered living standards. From this certain Marxists seem to infer, in a vague way, that Germany is still a capitalist state. But obviously all class societies have been characterized by such exploitation. The differentiating criterion must be sought elsewhere. Marx gives it: "The essential difference between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave labor and one based on wage labor, lies only in the mode in which this surplus-labor is in each case extracted from the actual producer, the laborer." Under slavery this surplus-labor (the labor over and above that needed for the maintainance and reproduction of the laborer himself) is appropriated by the ruling class in one way, under feudalism in another, and under capitalism in still another, through the appropriation of "surplus value."

Surplus value is realized through the mechanism of the market system. The worker sells his labor power to the capitalist. Here, as in the case of the commodity, what seems at first glance a perfectly simple transaction, Marx was able to demonstrate is actually very subtle and complex. In previous forms of economy, the subject class could not possibly overlook the fact of its subjection, since its surplus-labor was directly, openly appropriated by the ruling class. But under capitalism, this relationship is concealed by the market mechanism. "He [the worker] and the owner of money meet in the market, and deal with each other as on the basis of equal rights, with this difference alone, that one is buyer, the other seller; both, therefore, equal in the eyes of the law. . . . He must constantly look upon his labor-power as his own property, his own commodity, and this he can only do by placing it at the disposal of the buyer temporarily, for a definite period of time. By this means alone can he avoid renouncing his rights of ownership over it." The result is that the worker conceives of himself as the owner of a commodity (his labor-power) which he sells to the employer just as any owner sells any other commodity—free to dispose of his private property as he thinks best, to sell or not sell according to the price offered. Thus he doesn't realize he is contributing surplus-labor to the employer, and it was of course Marx's great task to make this clear to him. "The Roman slave was held by fetters; the wage laborer is bound to his owner by invisible threads. . . . His economical bondage is both brought about and concealed by the periodic sale of himself, by his change of masters, and by the oscillation in the market price of labor power."

In Nazi Germany, the threads have again become visible. Since wages have been frozen along with prices by state action, there are no more "oscillations in the market price of labor power." Nor is there any "change of masters," since the state is now his master, exercising all the functions of the employer: setting of wage rates, conditions of labor, hiring and firing. It is true that the forms of the old labor market are still for the most part kept up—though there is a trend towards direct state conscription of labor power—but these, as in the case of the capitalist market in general, are purely forms. A strike for higher wages or shorter hours would have to be directed against the state power which decides wages and hours; it would become at once a political act, to be dealt with directly by the Gestapo. The private "employer" is little more than a straw boss, enforcing orders handed down to him by the state bureaucracy. This change in some ways greatly intensifies the sharpness of the struggle between exploited and exploiter. But this struggle takes place in terms quite different from those which Marx described as characteristic of the capitalist system of society.

The Nature of the Soviet Union

I do not consider the Soviet Union to be any sort of socialist or "workers" State, whether "degenerated" or not, but rather a new form of class society based on collective ownership of the means of production by the ruling bureaucracy. It is not only not socialism, but it is a form of society profoundly repugnant to the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which have been shared by most radicals, bourgeois or socialist, since 1789. That it is based on collectivised property, and that it is the heir of the first successful proletarian revolution (in much the same sense as Nazism is the heir of the Weimar Republic)—these facts call for a revision of traditional Marxist conceptions.

The most important attempt to apply Marxist theories to the development of Soviet Russia was, of course, Trotsky's. His analysis seems to me wrong in two major respects: (1) he expected the counter-revolution to come in the form of a restoration of capitalist property relations; (2) he saw a basic antagonism between the collectivised economy and the totalitarian political regime. These judgments flowed from his Marxist belief that capitalism and socialism are the only historical alternatives today. In the turning-point year 1928, Trotsky therefore considered the chief threat to the revolution to come from the kulaks and nepmen, with Bukharin as their spokesman. Stalin he actually termed a "centrist" who would soon be brushed aside once the renascent bourgeoisie had consolidated their position—or, given a more favorable turn, after the workers had rallied to Trotsky's own socialist platform. When the next year Stalin crushed Bukharin, began to liquidate the kulaks, and instituted the First Five Year Plan, Trotsky was compelled by the logic of his theories to salute all this as a "leftward" step. Actually, I think Anton Ciliga is right, in his remarkable book, *The Russian Enigma*, when he presents the First Five Year Plan as the foundation of the totalitarian society Stalin has built. The key passage (pp. 103-4) is worth quoting—it should be remembered Ciliga is describing the conclusions he came to in 1930 after several years of life in Russia:

"Did not the captains of the Five Year Plan bear a resemblance to the ships' captains of Cortes? Was there not the same thirst for pillage and conquest under a guise that was sometimes ingenuous and sometimes had the cynicism of Christian—or Communist—missionary activity? Both ancient and modern conquistadors brought not only guns and blood but also a new order, more oppressive but on a higher level than the old. The conquerors did not bring happiness to the people; they brought them civilization.

"These reflections, this interpretation of the Five Year Plan, were in direct contradiction to the official theories of Stalinism, as well as to those of the Trotskyist Opposition. Trotskyism as well as Stalinism saw in these events only a

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struggle between two social orders: proletariat versus bourgeoisie, the latter embracing the kulaks and the relics of the former ruling classes. As for me, I had come to the conclusion that three social systems were taking part in the struggle: State capitalism,* private capitalism and socialism, and that these three systems represented three classes: the bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie (including the kulaks) and the proletariat. . . . The difference between Trotsky and Stalin lay in the fact that . . . Stalin saw the triumph of pure socialism, pure dictatorship of the proletariat, whereas Trotsky perceived and stressed the gaps and bureaucratic deformations of the system. . . . The experience of subsequent years showed me the strength of the organic bonds that united the Trotskyist Opposition with the bureaucratic regime of the Soviets."

Because he saw a fictitious antagonism between collectivism and dictatorship, Trotsky insisted that the Stalinist bureaucracy were Bonapartist usurpers, a gang of bandits who had grabbed control of the collectivised economy but who were forced, in order to maintain their political power, to take actions which clashed with the needs of this economy. But it would now appear that *there is no such conflict*, that economic collectivisation and total dictatorship can exist peacefully side by side, their gears meshing in smoothly together. The very thing which today is to many people an indication of the progressive nature of the Soviet Union, namely the successful resistance to German invasion, seems to me to show something quite different: that the decisive contradictions Trotsky saw between collectivism and dictatorship do not exist. Trotsky always predicted that this alleged contradiction would cause great internal political difficulties for Stalin in the event of war, especially if the war began with big defeats. The strain of war would widen the alleged fissure between the masses and the bureaucracy, he thought. But the actual course of events has been quite different: although the war began with the most catastrophic large-scale defeats, not even a rumor has reached us of any political opposition to the regime at any time. This does not mean Stalin's regime is therefore progressive; Hitler also had wide popular support. Modern totalitarianism can integrate the masses so completely into the political structure, through terror and propaganda, that they become the architects of their own enslavement. This does not make the slavery less, but on the contrary more —a paradox there is no space to unravel here. The historical "point" is that the two great totalitarianisms, Germany and Russia, have met the supreme test of a modern class society, namely war, more successfully than the bourgeois democracies have. Bureaucratic collectivism, not capitalism, is the most dangerous future enemy of socialism.

6. Modern War and the Class Struggle

In the century after Waterloo (1815-1914), there was only one war in Europe between first-class powers: the Franco-Prussian War. In the first half of the 20th century, there have already occurred two world wars which involved not only all the great European powers but also the USA, Russia and Japan; and a third world war is generally anticipated. Furthermore, World War II was much more destructive of lives, property and culture than World War I, and the atomic bomb promises to make World War III devastating beyond any historical parallel.

These are commonplaces, but it is easy (and pleasant) to forget them. It is also easy to forget that the whole body of socialist theory, from the Utopians through Marx, Engels, Proudhon and Kropotkin to Luxemburg, Lenin and Trotsky (after whom it ceased to develop significantly) was built up during the "Hundred Years Peace" after Waterloo.

From these facts, two conclusions emerge. (1) The preparation and waging of war is now the normal mode of existence of every great nation; the creation of military force is no longer one among other means of advancing the national interest but rather, it *is* now the national interest (cf. Simone Weil's "Words and War" in the last issue). (2) Since the chronic world warfare of our day was unknown to them, the theoreticians of socialism devoted their attention mainly to the internal class struggle and failed to work out an adequate theory of the political significance of war; this gap still remains to be filled; until it is, modern socialism will continue to have a somewhat academic flavor.

The Inadequacy of the Marxian View of War

Marxism regards war as a means to an end, a method of advancing certain definite class interests; as a means, it is subordinated to its end, so that if the destruction it causes seems likely to exceed the gains to those groups using this means, they will presumably not use it; there is implied in this whole view a certain rationality even moderation and limit, to warfare, so that one can say that a given war may offer a "revolutionary opportunity" or that the victory of one side may be more advantageous to the cause of socialism than the victory of the other.

There was some truth in these ideas in Marx's time, but they are now obsolete. War has become an end in itself; instead of advancing certain class or national interests at the expense of others, war tends more and more to make the situation of the "victors" indistinguishable from that of the "defeated", as in Europe today; the effects of the technical measures that must be taken to fight a modern war have become more important than any political effect of the war's outcome. In a word, war seems to have lost its rationality, so that one might say there will probably be a third world war because there has been a second world war; that is, the existence of powerful warmaking apparatuses, with economies and social institutions deformed to support them, and the quite justified fears of every nation of attack from every other nation—these factors are the key to the problem, rather than the expansive needs of capitalist

* This is what I call "Bureaucratic Collectivism". Since the market seems to me the distinguishing mark of capitalism, the term "State capitalism" has always appeared a contradiction in terms.

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imperialism (which the new State-capitalist economic techniques have largely obviated) or the "contradiction" between Soviet collectivism and American private capitalism (which exists but is not so automatic in its effects as Marxists think). As Jack Jones observed last issue, the machine is out of control and is grinding away according to its own logic. Here is another example of what Frank Fisher calls "reification" ("thing-ification"): human creations developing their own dynamic and imposing their own laws on their creators.

Although Marx was the first to analyze this tendency in capitalism ("the fetishism of commodities"), he had no such insight about warmaking. One is struck by the superficiality of Marx's ideas about war, in contrast to his understanding of capitalism. "However the war may end," he wrote during the Franco-Prussian war, "it has given the French proletariat practice in arms, and that is the best guarantee of the future." (*Letters to Kugelmann*, p. 116) The proletariat has by now had plenty of such practice; our problem is to get less of it. This simplistic notion of Marx's (whose very simplicity shows what a perfunctory interest he took in the question of war, for his mind was not a simple one) was understandable in his day, but what would we think of a modern socialist who would advance it?

So, too, with the related expectation that out of the chaos of war would come revolutionary opportunities. "Marx and Engels hailed the Crimean War," writes a biographer, "For, after all, the war did mean that the three major powers which had been the mainstay of counter-revolution had fallen out, and when thieves fall out, honest folks are likely to benefit by it." And Engels, after a remarkably accurate prediction of the nature and even the line-up of World War I, added: ". . . only one result absolutely certain: general exhaustion and the establishment of the conditions for the ultimate victory of the workingclass. . . . This, my lords, princes and statesmen, is where in your wisdom you have brought old Europe. And when nothing more remains to you but to open the last great war dance—that will suit us all right. The war may perhaps temporarily push us into the background, may wrench from us many a position already conquered. But when you have set free forces which you will be unable to control, things may go as they will: at the end of the tragedy, you will be ruined and the victory of the proletariat will either be already achieved or at any rate inevitable."

The quotation from Trotsky at the head of this article shows the persistence of this approach to war among Marxists even today. Now we see that even after *two* world wars, the victory Engels expected has turned out to be all too evitable. It is true that capitalism (and bureaucratic collectivism) has "set free forces" it is "unable to control", but the socialists are equally unable to control these forces. The "general exhaustion" Engels rightly foresaw as an aftermath of world war includes also the proletariat. Modern warfare is so insanely destructive that the seeds of a new order are wiped out along with the old order. The failure of anything to come out of the European resistance movement shows that the masses are at the moment incapable of political effort. Nerves twisted by saturation bombing raids, feelings numbed by massacre and suffering, vigor sapped by too little food for too many years—out of these thistles we must not expect figs.

A related Marxian illusion is that the victory of one or the other side in a modern war may advance the cause of socialism. Marx and Engels took sides, on this basis, in the American Civil War and in the Franco-Prussian War. I think it may be questioned now whether the beneficial results they expected from these conflicts (abolition of slavery, unification of Germany) have turned out to be quite so important to "progress" as they expected; the Negroes are far from "emancipated" and the coming-of-age of the German nation has been the basis for imperialism rather than socialism. The hardboiled pragmatic attitude of Marxism shows up at its worst in this now crucial matter of taking a stand in a war. See, for example, the extraordinary letters Engels wrote to Bebel in 1891 on the proper line to take in the war he saw materializing between Germany and France-Russia. He reasoned that because "we [i. e., the German Social-Democracy] have the almost absolute certainty of coming to power within ten years", a German victory was essential. "The victory of Germany is therefore the victory of the revolution, and if it comes to war we must not only desire victory but further it by every means. . . . We must *demand* the general arming of the people." (My emphasis—D.M.) In sketching out the military strategy of such a war, Engels sounds like a member of the Imperial General Staff. And all this, of course, in the name of the revolution. (See *Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, pp. 488-493) This superficial view of war—I had almost said "frivolous"—is perhaps excusable in a 19th century thinker, but it cannot be forgiven after World Wars I and II. Yet the great bulk of the Second International took it in both these wars, with the addition of the Stalinists in this war; and already we hear the same kind of reasoning advanced in lining up sides in World War III.

Such small Marxist groups as the Trotskyists and the British I.L.P. do not share this illusion, which is good, but they hold to an explanation of the origin of modern war which is also based on a Marxist analysis and which blinds them to the primary nature of the problem. Namely, that the expansive needs of capitalism and the resulting competition for colonies, foreign markets, and overseas outlets for investment is the cause of wars. This theory cannot explain the warlike tendencies of bureaucratic collectivisms like the Soviet Union or post-1936 Germany, the most militarily aggressive powers of our times. And even capitalistic powers, as Weil pointed out, go to war now rather to gain or defend the means of making war (oil fields, strategic bases, friendly smaller nations) than for the classic Marxian reasons. The capitalist, motivated by rationalistic profit and loss considerations, fears the risk of war much more than the military man, the bureaucrat, or even the idealistic liblab. In Japan, the big-business Zaibatsu were the peace party; it was the militarists, basing themselves on the peasant conscripts and playing a demagogically "popular" game against the big-business politicians, who pushed Japan along its imperialist path after 1932. Perhaps the strongest argument against the Marxist interpretation is the failure of American imperialism to dominate Europe, as Trotsky predicted it would, after World War I,

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and the even more striking weakness of American foreign policy today. In the case of the Big Three, the degree of imperialist aggressiveness seems to be in inverse proportion to the strength of capitalist institutions.

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Not only has it become impossible to fit modern war into the Marxian framework, but a reverse action has also taken place: war has had a shattering effect on that framework.

Economic: "More Work, Better Pay"

Marx and Engels regarded the periodic economic crises which they predicted would occur under capitalism as the immediate causes of revolutions. "We can almost calculate the moment," wrote the latter in his preface to the first volume of *Capital*, "when the unemployed, losing patience, will take their own fate into their hands." And Marx, in *The Class Struggles in France*, noted that "a real revolution is only possible in the periods when these two factors, the modern productive forces and the bourgeois production forms, come into collision with each other. . . . A new revolution is only possible in consequence of a new crisis. It is, however, just as certain as this." How do these crises arise? Marx sums it up in *Capital* (V. 3, p. 568): "The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop productive forces in such a way that only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be the limit."

In a fully-developed Bureaucrative Collectivist society like that of Russia, none of the above applies: crises may occur, but they have a political character and cannot be shown—or at least have not been shown—to arise from the kind of periodic and automatic economic imbalance described by Marx. The forms of production still conflict with the productive forces—but along new lines. In societies like our own and England, which are still capitalist but in which Bureaucratic Collectivism is spreading, techniques of State spending, economic control, and deficit financing have been developed which in practice *have* avoided crises and in theory *should* be able to do so. These new economic forms are closely related to preparation for warfare. As Stalin's recent election speech emphasized, the Five Year Plans were primarily armament-building programs. Hitler's rearming of Germany was made possible by the brilliant adaptation Dr. Schacht made of Keynes' theories, which he carried so far as to produce by 1936 (and quite without intending to do so) an economy that was more Bureaucratic Collectivist than it was capitalist. As for the military implications of New Deal economics in this country, see "Towards a Permanent War Economy", by Walter J. Oakes, in POLITICS, Feb. 1944.

The modern warmaking State, even if it is still mainly capitalist, thus avoids Marx's "inevitable" economic crises. Through deficit spending, it enlarges the purchasing power of the masses. And it brings to bear "the power of consumption of the entire society" through vast orders for munitions (a form of buying which has the further advantage of removing the goods entirely outside the market sphere so that they don't compete for a share of the public spending power; the ultimate consumer of munitions—and the adjective is most fitting—is the Enemy soldier). There is also largely eliminated another one of the factors to which Marx looked for the self-disintegration of capitalism: the "industrial reserve army of the unemployed". In wartime, this becomes a real army. In peacetime, it gets employment through the measures just noted. For, while Marx was able to demonstrate how essential "an industrial reserve army" was to the bourgeoisie to keep down the price of labor, such an army is of no advantage to the rulers of a warmaking society, which needs two things above all: "national unity" and full production. Unemployment, with its idle and discontented millions, from this standpoint has only disadvantages.

Finally, nothing improves the economic position of the working class and strengthens its trade unions more than a really good war. This phenomenon, which was uneasily noted by Marxists in World War I, has become positively absurd in World War II. In this country, there was a considerable increase in union membership during the war, and "maintenance-of-membership" clauses, which give the union a certain degree of stability, became standard procedure in War Labor Board awards. Manufacturing wages went up 71% (from $26 to $45 a week average) between 1940 and 1943. In England, the Labor Ministry recently announced that between 1938 and 1945 the weekly earnings of industrial workers rose 80%. This is all common knowledge, but it puts an odd twist on the idea that the improvement of the class position of the workers is necessarily connected with progress. And it makes it very difficult to convince the workers *as workers* that war is a curse.

> *Jésus Espinosa, a Mexican gardener of the city of San Antonio, Texas was asked last week to venture an opinion on an important subject. What did he think of the atomic bomb?*
>
> *Jésus stared, then shrugged his shoulders eloquently. Should the U.S. give it to other nations?*
>
> *"Why not?" said Jésus.*
>
> *But what if the other nations started a war with it?*
>
> *Jésus brightened. "More work, better pay," he said.*
>
> *Did he and his friends discuss the possibilities of atomic energy?*
>
> *Jésus gave his interviewer a long, pitying look and went back to shoveling dirt.*
>
> ("Time," March 18).

Political: The Dominance of Foreign Policy

It is true that Mussolini was demagogic when he transposed the class-struggle theme by speaking of "proletarian nations" like Italy whose hope lay in rebellion against "bourgeois nations" like England (stifling at the same time his own workingclass movement the better to fight what might be—demagogically—called "the international class struggle"). But the point is he was not *just* being demagogic. Nor was Hitler when he joined those hitherto warring concepts "national" and "socialism." Everywhere today we see the class struggle *inside* nations yielding to struggle *between* nations, so that the main conflict nowadays is between peoples and not between exploiters and exploited. If history has indeed *a* motor—which I doubt, just as I doubt the existence of History with a capital "H"—then the motor is war, not revolution. Everywhere "national

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unity" is weakening the class struggle: politically, it moderates class conflicts by emphasizing the common national enemy; economically, it makes concessions to the masses in return for their support in warmaking. In Russia, where Hitler's "national socialism" has been realized far more completely than it ever was in Germany, the political control of the rulers over the ruled is so complete that the economic concessions are the most trifling, the gap between the living standards of the masses and their exploiters is the widest.

Marxists will retort that revolutionary class struggle inside each nation is the way to weaken the present supernationalism that is leading us to a third world war. I would agree that it is certainly an important method, but this simply raises the question of WHY there is so little class struggle today, WHY the masses follow their leaders to war with such docility. It is one purpose of this article to suggest that the Marxist answers to this question of WHY are superficial and in large measure obsolete. And certainly, until we can answer the question WHY the condition exists, we cannot do much effectively about changing it.

The more war becomes dominant, the more the ruling classes can monopolize continually—not just in time of actual hostilities—the most powerful ideological weapon they have ever grasped: the appeal for "unity" of the whole nation against a threat from outside. This weapon is powerful psychologically, because it plays on very deep fears and in-group loyalties. It is also powerful in rational terms, because it is perfectly true that national defeat is catastrophic for *all* classes, not just for the ruling class. Thus the strongest appeal of the Nazis in the terrible final year of the war was their picture of what the consequences of defeat would be for the German people; and now we see—and doubtless the Germans see even better—that the Nazis were quite right in all their predictions.

One striking confirmation of the way war rather than class struggle has become the center of our world is the importance that foreign policy now assumes. The disagreements between "Left" and "Right" on domestic policy, unsubstantial enough precisely because of the needs of "national unity" in order to present a strong front to competing nations, vanish completely when the really vital question of foreign policy arises. Thus the British Labor Party has defended the Empire and its "life-line" as bitterly as the Tories did, and Foreign Minister Bevin takes pride in the "continuity" of his policies with those of his Tory predecessor, Eden. Bevin's policies were upheld, 260 to 6, at a recent meeting of Labor M.P.'s. (*Time*, April 8). Not enough attention, by the way, was paid to a speech Bevin made last April during the election campaign in which he proposed that "foreign policy should henceforth be treated as an all-party matter." It is true that the French Socialists favored a smaller army than DeGaulle, but that was because they had a more sober appreciation of what is economically possible now than the romantic general had, not because of any principled difference. Thus when Foreign Minister Bidault, speaking in the National Assembly, defended France's colonial record and defied the rest of the world to try to dispossess French of her sovereignty over certain territories, *Time* (April 9, 1945) reported: "For once, no cries of dissent welled from the Assembly. For Right, Center and Left alike, empire was above politics." This, too, was "continuity of policy", for on February 3, 1939, the French Chamber of Deputies *unanimously* resolved "that all parts of the Empire are placed under the protection of the nation to the same extent as continental France, that the sovereignty of France is indivisible and cannot be transmitted, delegated or shared."

Now that the national State has become the great menace, and war and foreign policy the great issues, the "realistic" attitude that has always distinguished Marx and his followers on these matters has become quite unrealistic (if one's aim is not effective warmaking or the furtherance of nationalistic ambitions). The Anarchists' uncompromising rejection of the State, the subject of Marxian sneers for its "absolutist" and "Utopian" character, makes much better sense in the present era than the Marxian relativist and historical approach. The pacifists also seem to be more realistic than the Marxists both in their understanding of modern war and also in their attempts to do something about it. A very interesting essay could be written today about the unrealism of Realism and the metaphysical nature of Materialism.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *The second part of this article will appear in the next issue.*)

IT'S-ABOUT-TIME DEPARTMENT

BRITISH LABOR PARTY OUT TO WIN
SUPPORT OF ORGANIZED LABOR
—Headlines in N. Y. Herald-Tribune, Nov. 25, 1945.

DEPARTMENT OF UNDERSTATEMENT

The past book auction season was one of the most active in years. . . . The only two known stanzas of "The Bells" in the author's autograph brought $6,000, approximately $78 a word, perhaps a record for poetry, and a price that would have brought tears of joy to Poe. . . .

—N. Y. Times, March 3.

WITH OUR CONSCIENTIOUS REPORTERS

(1)

Navy Day proved dynamic enough to break down the customary reticence of Mrs. Harry S. Truman. . . . Following the commissioning of the carrier, "Franklin D. Roosevelt", she was pressed by reporters to comment on the ceremony. She said:

"It was a wonderful event. Very impressive. Such a tribute to Mr. Roosevelt. That was the part that impressed me."

—N. Y. Times, Oct. 8, 1945.

(2)

The First Lady and her party arrived early at the Metropolitan Opera opening. . . . They seemed to be enjoying the occasion, with Margaret gaily introducing her mother right and left. She caught sight of Hugh R. Brown, supervisor of the House. "Oh, mother, I want you to meet Mr. Brown," she said, introducing him.

Upstairs she greeted Mrs. August Belmont, and called: "Mother, here's Mrs. Belmont."

—N. Y. Times, Nov. 27, 1945.

MR. EDITOR, MEET MR. EDITOR

He (Truman) is merely an intelligent, conscientious politician doing his best. **(Editorial on first page of The New Leader, Feb. 16.)**

He (Truman) is following the old clubhouse pattern. It makes him oblivious to the public good and even to political expediency. **(Editorial on last page of The New Leader, Feb. 16.)**

"THE STORY OF JOHN MAN" (Cont'd.)

PORT CHESTER, N. Y.—"Jump!" said the sergeant.

Tom Thomas jumped, just the way he used to when he was a paratrooper. Only this time he leaped right out of his second-story bedroom window.

Thomas, 36, fell 30 feet to the bottom of an airshaft, where he awoke abruptly. It was all a bad dream, including the sergeant.

—Los Angeles Daily New, Jan. 23.

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Why the Resistance Failed

An Outline

by Louis Clair

IT has been stated recently by certain analysts of the European situation that the Resistance movement was essentially a national movement, with no wider aim than the expulsion of the foreign oppressors. If one accepts this view, there obviously exists no problem, since in this respect the Resistance has not failed at all.

But, although it is true that the Resistance sprung up as a national movement and that its avowed aim was the expulsion of the national enemy, the fact that the movement was composed of the most diverse political and ideological groups to a far greater extent than all previous national movements had been, suggests that it was preoccupied with political problems far transcending the national content. And specifically, quite an important part of its leadership was pervaded with socialist, or at least leftist ideas which were given great emphasis in all their public statements. It is in this sense, then, that one may speak of the failure of the Resistance, and its inability to implement the political aims which it had set for itself becomes a problem well worth the attention of socialist theoreticians.

The following is not intended to be an extensive analysis, but should be understood only as an indication of the direction which further investigations should take. I need not stress that the criticism I present is not meant in any sense to distract from the achievements of a movement that I still consider in many respects the most hopeful we have witnessed in recent years.

1. *Lack of Social Homogeneity*

The Resistance movement never was homogeneous in its class basis, though its backbone in all countries has been the working class. Hannah Arendt, in a recent article in *Partisan Review*, and many other observers take this precisely to be its great advantage over other recent political movements. It seems to me that here is to be found one of its main weaknesses. Not that one should have wished for a "pure" working-class movement. But a movement that is not primarily rooted in the self-activity of the workers is bound to become, at best, politically ineffective once the immediate objective of "driving out the German" is attained. It becomes a plaything in the hands of crafty managers and political agents.

Necessarily, all sorts of divergent elements were attracted to the fight. The left-wing intellectual leaders of the Resistance tricked themselves into the belief that their newspaper articles and programs really represented the movement; and thus they thought that since they, in their great majority, expressed some sort of vaguely socialistic ideology, the movement as a whole was not only a military organization to drive out the foreign invaders but also a socialist movement. In fact the gulf between ideology and social reality was very wide. The character of the movement finally was determined not by programs but by the social forces that it represented. It could be held together only as long as it stood united against the common enemy. Once this enemy was defeated, it immediately broke into is component parts—along class lines. Indeed, there was little the Catholic priest and the unionist, the son of the industrialist and the socialist teacher and journalist could have in common outside of the negative aim of driving the Germans out. The movement had been, as someone pointed out, "un mariage d'amour sans raison ou un mariage de raison sans amour."

It was not enough to proclaim on paper the solidarity of all Resistance men. When it came to realities, the gulf between "the forces of order" and "the forces of anarchy" was bound to appear immediately. It could be temporarily bridged only by a newly emerging group of "social engineers".

2. *Lack of Political Theory*

The lack of class homogeneity was reflected in an almost complete lack of political theory, especially among those who thought that resistance as such was not enough and who most sincerely sought to bring about revolutionary social change through it. They lacked the method that would enable them to understand the world around them and thus to intelligently go about changing it. Their many wonderful ideals were floating in mid-air, and they were completely unprepaired for the harsh political and social realities which they had to face after liberation.

Until then, everything had been very uncomplicated. One knew who the enemy was and one knew who was one's friend. But now the best among them discovered that many of those who had fought at their side had become the enemy of their goal. Everything got hopelessly mixed up. Roger Secretan, one of the intellectual leaders of the French Resistance, said that "the heroes of the underground action are political babies, without intellectual or creative force."

During the occupation, they had been permitted to print the most revolutionary statements on the paper that was smuggled in through British government channels—but now that these happy days had come to an end, decisive political action demanded mature theoretical guidance.

And now, those who had written abstract Freedom of the Individual, and Truth and Justice on their banners, suddenly uprooted, suddenly in an atmosphere they no longer understood, desperately tried to be "realistic", desperately wanted to do something "constructive". Just as the Spanish Anarchists, who had fought Marxism and the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the name of an anti-statist theory, when the test of poliical action came, joined the bourgeois government. The Italian partisan leaders who had been close to the *Justicia E Liberta* movement—a movement that had criticized Marxism for its "harsh" and

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"inhuman" determinism—suddenly popped up in the government of his Majesty the King of Italy; and many a hero of the French underground suddenly found himself in a Parisian ministry.—I am not suggesting that these men had become "traitors"—not at all. They had become victims of their own political and theoretical inadequacy. They never had grasped that the main moral demand of our times is precisely to understand these times—so as to be able to change them. Had they had a more mature grasp of political theory they would have understood that, where they had attained power through their own action, this power should not again be handed to the De Gaulles and Bonomis. But as things were, they dutifully relinquished power to "the first resister of France" and to National Unity Cabinets who immediately proceeded to liquidate the organs which the Resistance had created and which alone could have safeguarded their achievements.

3. *The National Character of the Movement*

The Resistance, in spite of all its socialist phraseology, had only one common denominator: it was a *national* movement. We all have been tricked into believing its public declarations. We believed that a new internationalist or at least European spirit had been animating the Underground in the various countries. I myself have been a victim of this optical illusion. (See "The France of Tomorrow", POLITICS, Sept. 1944.—ED.) It has become clear that only a very thin if articulate layer of Resistance leaders really believed in the internationalist slogans. The mass of the men of the Resistance felt above all that they, as Frenchmen, Belgians, Dutchmen, etc., had to fight the invader.

This nationalist sentiment often was coupled with a socialist longing—but it remained nationalist, nevertheless. It is *this* that made it easy for the De Gaulles and the Van Ackers to direct it again into safe channels. Nationalism too often turned into chauvinism. The pure knights of democracy spouted against the German *Untermenschen* and spoke with pride of "*our*" colonies.

It is indeed significant that the British and American propaganda broadcasts stressed above all the nationalist aspects of the Resistance movement. Nationalism was the only safe ideology from their point of view—all the more safe since it no longer corresponded to the social realities of a Europe that had definitely outlived the stage of the independent progressive national state. They thus fostered nationalism while they proceeded to further undermine the basis of any real independent national existence of European peoples.

4. *Corruption Through Outside Help*

Because of its nationalist character, the movement was all the more easily corrupted by the outside help it received. It considered itself an ally of the armies of the great democracies and thus was prepared to accept not only material help but also moral guidance from the outside. The RAF planes and the American parachutists may have brought much needed material but at the same time they corrupted the movement morally and vitiated its aims. It is difficult to write consistently on the need for a social revolution with printers' ink furnished by the Intelligence Service. It is impossible in the long run, to maintain revolutionary integrity while accepting the dictates of the BBC. Thus the means more and more corrupted the ends. In this respect, what happened on both sides during the later stages of the Spanish civil war is a case in point.

Furthermore, if one considers one's movement primarily an auxiliary force of an army attacking from the outside, one obviously does not consider the development of mass action and mass activity as the most important goal. Blowing up trains then becomes more important than the slow building of conscious political forces. Terrorism then is no longer an inevitable part of mass action but rather a substitute for it. The movement becomes more and more a strictly managed affair.

Thus the discrepancy between militant action and mass consciousness caused the gulf between the activist elite of the Maquis and the bulk of the population to increase. For what was wanted were shock troops, not popular uprisings. De Gaulle, theoretician of the *Armée de Métier*, favored a *Maquis de Métier*.

5. *Escape from Freedom*

This leads us to a point that to me seems important above all. Modern man in industrial society even in normal times is made more and more powerless and impotent. How much stronger is this feeling among men who for years have had no normal position in life, no job, not even the most elementary security.

This feeling of impotence and powerlessness made for the fact that large parts of the population either did not act at all, simply trying to offer passive resistance, or, when they acted, did so only when they thought that they were shielded by powerful organizations.

This is one reason the Communists in all Resistance movements acquired such a tremendously important position. I am not here trying to suggest that there were not many other historical reasons for this development—above all the Soviet myth—but nevertheless, this factor seems of great importance. The power of the CP grew in direct proportion to the advances of the Red Army. Similarly, of course, others oriented themselves toward England and America, or, in France, toward this great mythical and powerful man whose voice they could hear over the BBC.

It may very well be that the Fuehrer cult, which was supposedly smashed when Hitler killed himself in the Reich's Chancellery, is as strong as ever today among the frustrated, deceived, powerless and embittered masses of Europe. The above-mentioned French Resistance leader, Roger Secretan, writes in *Esprit* for June, 1945, speaking of the needed revolution: "This revolution *one man* has the *miraculous power* to accomplish, or simply to sanction by legal acts without any bloodshed. How doesn't one see that audacity in the reformist action of the government, backed by the revolutionary elite, offers the only hope? The Resistance has so far failed because it has not been able *to remind General de Gaulle* that the basic elements of Gaullism are revolutionary." (my emphasis, L. C.)

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6. *Demoralization through Hunger*

Not all the reasons for the failure of the Resistance can be attributed to its own composition and ideological shortcomings. There is also the incredible misery of daily existence—maybe the most destructive force of all. Among the most stupid dogmas to which many revolutionaries, especially of the anarchist variety, have clung, is that increased misery would bring about increased revolutionary activity. Just the opposite may be true under certain conditions. The daily quest for the bare essentials of life saps not only physical but also psychological energies. Who has eaten what today? and who will eat what tomorrow? are basically urgent problems. The black market can corrupt a whole people and sap its energies. At a time when the masses are conscious of their power, hunger may not only be neutralized through a great political idea, it may even act as a stimulus for concerted, direct action. But when people feel powerless physical hardships accelerate and deepen the disintegration of society.

Thus it may not only be callousness, but in part conscious calculation, that has made for the fact that so little relief has been sent to Europe from this country. Great hunger may be the most potent foe of revolutionary activity; strangely enough, the black market may be a most welcome safeguard of the status quo. Starvation frequently breeds passivity, not action.

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The above points are by no means exhaustive. I have not spoken of the disastrous influence of the Stalinists, the pitiful role of the official Socialist Party. I have not stressed the implications of the current fiction that nationalization as such is already a step on the road towards liberation of the human individual. I have no doubt omitted many other things.

Nevertheless, to sum up, it seems to me that the main reasons for the defeat were above all the lack of ideological clarity and political theory, the corrupting influence of the foreign Allies (which was a consequence of this lack of political clarity), the nationalist and "above-all-classes" character of the movement, and the fact that at all times it remained emprisoned in the fetishism of the big organizations, based on the desire to get away from individual responsibility into the bosom of some all-knowing and all-powerful body. Spontaneity could not assert itself for everybody was supposed to stand in line.

In many senses, then, the Resistance was not a beginning of a new development but rather the end of an old one. It denoted the culmination of a process of deterioration of both spontaneous mass activity and independent socialist ideology (which for a whole historic period had been more and more emptied of its original content). The Resistance may have marked something of a springtide of human emotions; it certainly never was and never could have been a truly socialist and revolutionary movement.

DEPARTMENT OF UNDERSTATEMENT

The most spectacular event of the day was the reception given by Foreign Minister Bevin. It was today's equivalent of balls such as Prince Metternich gave at the Congress of Vienna. But instead of dancing all stood soberly around, with hundreds of eyes turning toward Foreign Commissar Molotov, who was surrounded by Russian plain-clothes men, each with a pistol in his right-hand pocket—which shows how much diplomacy has changed since Metternich's day.

—N. Y. Times, Sept. 14, 1945.

The Non-Violent Revolutionists

LEFT-WING non-violent revolutionists, bandied about and largely isolated for the duration by the Federal Government and the church agencies associated with it in administering conscription, came together at Chicago's Labor Center on February 6, 7, 8 and 9 in what may be one of the more significant political developments to come out of the war.

Ninety-five people, 45 voting participants and 50 observers, spent the major part of four days discussing, in commissions and floor debate, the implications and techniques of a program which rejected the capitalist economic order; the political state; reformism; and violence as a revolutionary technique. At the conclusion of the conference, the body voted to establish a Committee for Non-Violent Revolution, organized provisionally on the basis of substantial agreement with a set of principles embodied in conference resolutions, rather than as a tightly disciplined party or sect. For the purpose of coordinating action-programs of local groups and continuing exchange of theoretical discussion, the conference established a central steering committee with headquarters at 140 Claremont Avenue, New York.

The conference statement of principle, formulated in five committee reports, agreed on essential points with the original Call to a Conference, issued by a preliminary committee in the fall of last year, which read:

We favor decentralized, democratic socialism, guaranteeing worker-consumer control of industries, utilities, and other economic enterprises. We believe that the workers themselves should take steps to seize control of factories, mines, and shops.

We are as much opposed to bureaucratic state oppression as to oppression by private capital. We do not favor nationalization of industries under the existing governmental apparatus. We deny the right of the state to dictate the conditions of labor, to conscript, to spy on individuals, or to interfere with basic civil liberties.

We believe in realistic action against war, against imperialism, and against military or economic oppression by conquering nations, including the United States. We advocate such techniques of group resistance as demonstrations, strikes, organized civil disobedience, and underground organization where necessary. As individuals we refuse to join the armed forces, work in war industries, or buy government bonds, and we believe in campaigns urging others to do similarly.

We see non-violence as a principle as well as a technique. In all action we renounce the methods of punishing, hating, or killing any fellow human beings. We believe that non-violence includes such methods as sit-down strikes and seizure of plants.

We believe that revolutionary changes can only occur through direct action by the rank and file, and not by deals or reformist proposals directed to the present political and labor leadership. Therefore we advocate agitation among workers in specific areas as part of a nationally coordinated campaign.

We believe in the importance of small-scale experiments in group or community socialism, but we oppose the tendency of many such groups to isolate themselves from the world-wide class struggle.

We advocate building world-wide working class solid-

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arity through the strengthening and extension of local socialist groups and through their cooperation in a new Socialist International. We are opposed to attempts to create a world government from the top down, either through military alliance of capitalist states or through the creation of a monster world state similar in nature to existing national states.

The significance of the conference may perhaps be pointed up by referring to the elements which it accepted, and those which it rejected, in both traditional pacifist and traditional revolutionary theory.

The traditional absolutism and religiosity of pacifism was rejected in favor of a largely pragmatic emphasis on non-violence in terms of its necessity and relevance as a revolutionary technique. Likewise the traditional individualism of the conscientious objector was de-emphasized and the development of a mass war resistance movement was stressed. Whereas pacifism, even where it has become divorced from connection with the church, has hitherto tended to play down the class struggle in favor of gradualism, the conference openly avowed the role of non-violence as a weapon in class conflict. And in advocating the strategic use of sabotage and underground tactics where necessary, "in such a way as to avoid risk to human life other than our own," the resolutions drew the line between violence and non-violence at a new point.

As for traditional revolutionary theory, the conference rejected the Trotskyist-Leninist dictatorship of the proletariat, and the assumption that violence is necessary to revolution, without accepting reformism as an alternative. The impossibility of building a revolutionary society through compromise with capitalist institutions was stressed in the almost complete rejection of political action. The resolutions pointed out that the only road between reformism and revolutionary dictatorship lies in a mass non-violent movement, which is unique in that "the masses do not surrender their revolutionary weapons—their power to refuse submission to any authority—when the revolution is over."

The general tone of the conference, set in large part by the war experience of its members in their conflict with the government and traditional pacifist agencies, was anti-capitalist and anti-state in a near-anarchist sense. How far it went beyond former anarchist formulations seems questionable. Its picture of the post-revolutionary society seemed more a miscellaneous collection of objectives—local worker-consumer autonomy, free consumer choice of goods, equal pay for everyone, freedom to enter into even small scale private enterprises—than an analytical attempt to present a plausible sketch of a working economic system. In emphasizing decentralization as an objective, the conference largely ignored a question which is crucial if one is talking seriously about a revolution that might actually happen—the degree to which high decentralization in the interest of freedom will necessitate a lowering of economic efficiency and of the standard of living. The gap between the existing highly interdependent world economy, and the desired society based on locally autonomous economic and political groups, was hardly bridged on more than a purely verbal level.

In rejecting political action, the conference placed its reliance on agitation, seizure of existing plants, and development of new worker-consumer enterprises as the chief roads to a revolutionary society. But there was little attention given to the difference in likelihood of success between a non-violent *general* strike for worker control and *local* non-violent campaigns for seizure of plants within the framework of capitalist government. The question of the role of political action in rendering government as unoppressive as possible while plants are being seized and new plants built was hardly raised. Such specific questions as whether measures like the Socialist Party full-production bill, with its call for worker-consumer-public industries *under governmental encouragement*, should be considered revolutionary or counter-revolutionary were little debated.

The conference seems to me significant as the first effort at a systematic synthesis of elements which have hitherto been generally considered incompatible—rejection of statism (either capitalist or collectivist), rejection of reformism, and rejection of violence. This rejection had more of the tone of a Jeremiad than of an analytical consideration of what kind of program is really likely to have a chance of preventing war and totalitarianism in the next five, ten, or twenty years. But certainly it had a more solid ring than anything which has recently come out of the Socialist Party, the Trotskyists with their traditional advocacy of violent revolution, the religious and sentimental type of pacifism, the Socialist Labor Party waiting for the revolutionary moment, or those who hope to get immediate mass support for fundamental change through a mass third party. Until those many orphaned leftists who are tired of old approaches can produce something better, the Committee for Non-Violent Revolution may well serve as a rallying point from which to work out a new revolutionary program and technique.

DON CALHOUN

LABOR LEADS

THE United Automobile Workers has wound up its Tenth Convention, in Atlantic City. What promised to be a display of sharp ideological differences on the part of the delegates of the most militant union in the country turned out to be no more than a burst of rank-and-file independence against top leadership. Because the roots of Walter Reuther's bitter victory over R. J. Thomas lay no deeper than this, the delegates proceeded to hamstring their newly elected president by turning around and electing his political opponents to powerful policy-making posts. The other three top union posts are all held by Reuther's opponents: Thomas and Leonard in the vice-presidencies, Addes in the secretary-treasurership; the delegates even elected a new International Executive Board with a comfortable majority of anti-Reuther men.

Reuther is not a profound theoretician. He is a Socialist of sorts, possibly the Dubinsky type, and he has voluble remnants of the Socialist Party of America among his right-hand men. But whatever Reuther may be and regardless of the union politics that netted him his victory, his election to the presidency of the U. A. W. poses some important issues. Reuther's strategy in the General Motors strike and the "wage-price" keynote of his election campaign have stirred swift labor currents which are bound to make themselves felt both in the C. I. O. and out of it.

The welding together of wages and prices in collective bargaining may be a novel issue for the American Federation of Labor and something for John L. Lewis to growl about, but it is not a cleavage point between the auto-workers' new president and Philip Murray. It is not a burning issue within the auto union itself. Despite popular expectations, the U. A. W. is not likely to be torn by dissension over this policy. In a large measure, Murray's out-

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spoken "fondness for this great, big guy" (Thomas) at the convention was prompted more by the fact that he thought Reuther was carrying the ball a bit too fast than by any basic difference on this issue. It has been pointed out that the Steelworkers, under Murray's firm hand, sidestepped prices in obtaining their own wage boosts. But this has little real significance because of the different pictures that the steel and automobile industries present in the current stabilization set-up.

Nor will Reuther's wage-price policy upset the applecart within the U. A. W. because, regardless of union politics and the voluble Communist cells, Addes, Leonard and Thomas cannot afford to ignore reality. Wage increases are meaningless in the face of rising prices. Reuther's campaign message of "real wages—and prices" has fired the imagination of the public as well as the mass of union membership—and even the dull, old-time unioneering of R. J. Thomas can't gloss over this. (It is significant that at the convention Reuther found his greatest support among the delegates from the General Motors locals. The only part of organized labor that will not rise to this will be that section of labor which operates on faith and blackjacks. Lewis with a well-disciplined membership may thunder, as he did at the President's ineffectual labor-management conference, for an end to all price control. But no responsible C. I. O. leader could successfully oppose Reuther on this point.

Even as the convention was in session, the importance of Reuther's policy was being inadvertently emphasized by the government itself, which, in a series of undramatic but far-reaching moves, broke further into the nation's price line. In a special order, the Wage Stabilization Board enlarged on the types and amount of wage increases which management could utilize as a basis for asking price adjustments—all upward. Manufacturers can now use, without WSB approval, picayune pay boosts up to 65c an hour as reasons for filing for price relief with the O. P. A. Raises of any amount under established merit or bonus systems will receive due consideration from the Price Administrator for a price boost in the product manufactured. In the face of this, Reuther's policies are not too open to attack by labor leaders of any persuasion.

Presenting a far more delicate situation is the role of the Communists and fellow travelers in the C. I. O. and U. A. W. Ex-tool-and-die-maker Reuther is anathema to both the Communists and "big business". Both maneuvered mightily to discredit Reuther as much as possible. Vice-President Anderson of General Motors worked for a settlement that would be negotiated by the Thomas-Addes U. A. W. clique backed solidly by the Communists. Doubtlessly the settlement would have been swifter, as Thomas pointed out, if the ball had been taken away from Reuther. The vigilance of the Reuther men, however, caused the plan to misfire.

For the Communists' purposes, Reuther and his *Socialist Call* followers are a stumbling-block to their policy of labor chaos best typified by wild-cat strikes of the Kelsey-Hayes variety which embarrassed U. A. W. leaders on the eve of the G. M. strike by causing the ill-timed Ford shutdown. Today the Communists have no use for Reuther's championing of Labor-Management cooperation or guaranteed annual wage plans. That is all a part of yesterday and discredited Browderism.

This is Reuther's most serious problem and Phil Murray's too. A fear of splitting the C. I. O. on the Communist issue just at present may have been behind Murray's sponsorship of Thomas's candidacy at the convention. But the C. I. O. leader must know that a showdown is unavoidable. Even Sidney Hillman knows this and is now girding for a real row with his erstwhile playmates. With the coming battle ahead it may be that Murray will find that anti-Communist Reuther will be more useful to him as the head of the 600,000 United Auto-workers than a man like Secretary-Treasurer George Addes who has always played the fellow-traveler game well.

In the labor arena of today, where experts in collective bargaining have taken the place of the rough-and-tumble of demonstrations and picket lines, Walter Reuther presents a more colorful picture than most of the up-and-coming labor leaders. His glibness can vie with bushy eyebrows and Shakespearean phrases, but more than anything else Reuther has won appeal because he has popularized the Labor-Management conference table. He has brought it down to where the rank-and-file can see what is going on.

Few people, in or out of the union, are in the know when Lewis and his well-trained mine operators really get down to business. There is, of course, a dramatic prologue or epilogue to Lewisonian negotiations to which the press is admitted. The actual bargaining between the U. M. W. and the industrialists is held "in camera". This goes for other unions as well. Even Philip Murray believes in a quick, quiet delivery far away from the sound and fury of full membership meetings. Reuther is the man, however, who has irritated industry and labor bossism by talking about prices, markets, and new products as well as wages and working conditions right out in the open.

It may be that this will prove to be an antidote for the labor-management trend of recent years which has seen a small group of top industrialists and top unionists settle wages and prices between them.

BURTON BENDINER

THE LIBERAL ETHOS (Cont'd.)

Konoye's cheating of the war guilt trial through suicide shows the danger of special courtesies to upper-crust war criminals.

—Editorial in The Nation, Dec. 22, 1945.

THE MILITARY MIND: G. I. DIVISION

"That's the way it is," said the captain. "Americans look on the German women as loot, just like cameras or Lugers."

—"N.Y. World-Telegram", Jan. 21.

SCHOOL FOR DICTATORS

All successful candidates on the French Communist Party ticket were given a special three-day course in how to function as deputies. From the youngest to the oldest, including even those who had been deputies before the war, all of them attended the school, which was set up in the Fifth District in Paris.

—Combat (Paris), Nov. 4, 1945.

LIFE IN AMERICA: The Children's Hour

If you think the war advanced science and medicine, you should see what it has done for the new streamlined, jet-minded crop of kids!

Junior will soon be blasting away with "baby-bazookas" that fire corks fifty yards and explode with the noise of a block-buster. For the little tot, you can buy "Big Bertha" elephant guns and wooden howitzers named "the 90-mm." Kiddie-cars and scooters have been replaced by buzz-bombs on wheels, which Junior straddles while wearing helmet and goggles, with a realistic copy of a German Luger strapped to his side. Most of the buzz-bombs are equipped with screeching sirens.

—News report quoted in "Toys and Novelties", trade magazine, for March.

IN DARKEST MISSISSIPPI

Tom Jones, twenty-four-year-old Negro, was fatally wounded on Saturday evening by the Town Marshal of Woodville, Mississippi. . . .

The Negro was aboard a Greyhound bus from New Orleans, Louisiana. Upon arrival at Woodville the Negro started an argument with the bus driver over the whereabouts of his baggage. The argument became heated and the bus driver went and secured the Town Marshal who, according to Mayor Stockett, upon arriving at the scene found the condition such as made it necessary to shoot the Negro.

—The Natchez (Miss.) Democrat, as quoted by The New Republic for Nov. 5, 1945.

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Dedication Day

Rough Sketch for a Moving Picture

by James Agee

ON an afternoon in the early spring of 1946, in the noble space between the Washington Obelisk and the Lincoln Memorial, crowds, roped off from a great square, watched the statesmen, diplomats, military officials, scientists, clergymen, college presidents, newsreel cameramen and *Life* photographers who had assembled upon special platforms, under the unsteady sunlight, and under the uneasy motions of the flags of nearly all nations, to dedicate the heroic new Arch which was for all time to come to memorialize the greatest of human achievements.

The Arch, which had been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, was the master-builder's sole concession to the Romanesque; at that, he had made it proof against frost, earthquakes, and the inscription and carving of initials. Glistering more subtly than most jewels—for it was made not of stone but of fused uranium—it stood behind the billowing, rainbow-shaded veil which as yet concealed its dedicatory legend, like some giant captive royal slave of antiquity, face masked, the body nude.

From loudspeakers fairly successfully concealed within the Arch, or sprouting tall above the wide, renewing lawns like rigid quartets of zinc morning-glories, poured a special performance of the choral movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, in a new translation by Louis Aragon and Harry Brown, done under the supervision of Robert E. Sherwood, conducted by Arturo Toscanini in Studio 8-H in Rockefeller Centre, where an invited audience watched the dedication ceremony on the screen of television's first major hookup.

Even by still not wholly perfected television, it was a stirring sight. The many preliminary speeches, to be sure, had been rather more protracted and less satisfying than speeches on great occasions generally are; for it was not clear either to the speakers or to the listeners precisely why or to what purpose or idea the Arch had been raised, and was to be dedicated: they labored, rather, purely under an irresistible obligation both to indicate their recognition of a great event by erecting a permanent altar to it, and to sign their names to the moment in a few authorized words—as is still found necessary by many people, for instance, when a dead man is buried. The speeches, accordingly, were more notable for resonance, eloquence, and on every speaker's part a most scrupulous courtesy and optimism, than for understanding, far less communication of understanding. But once the speeches were over, the ceremony was a peculiarly simple one and achieved, as several Europeans and many of the more sophisticated natives were afterward to agree in semi-privacy, a level of good taste hardly to be expected of ordinary Americans.

All it amounted to, in the long run, was a moment of silence, during which only the restive flags and the sighing of the great veil especially distracted the eye. It involved, on the part of Maestro Toscanini (who was playing as even he had never played before), a Grand Pause, just before that majestic instant in Beethoven's symphony in which the basses, endorsed by trombones and emulated by soprani, intone the lines

I embrace ye, O ye Millions!
Here's a kiss for all the World!

—lines upon which, after earnest discussion whether to substitute for the somewhat fulsome and perhaps over-Teutonic word *kiss* the sturdily alliterative, more Whitmanesque and manly, more comradely, altogether healthier word *wink*, the retranslators had agreed that it was impossible to improve. During this pause, also, it was possible to hear the subdued rattle of Latin as four ravenous Cardinals raced towards the Consecration in all but perfect unison, their voices blended with that of the Pontifical Benediction, relayed from Rome; a group of eminent Protestant clergymen, each, between his closed eyes, pinching the bridge of his nose between thumb and forefinger as if adjusting an invisible pair of pince-nez, knelt each on one knee at the spread center of a new lawn handkerchief; the most prominent and progressive of American Reformist Rabbis all but inaudibly intoned *Eli, Eli,* intimately, into a neat small microphone; the twenty best Allied marksmen of the Second World War presented their rifles; and many members of many national bands lipped their reeds and mouthpieces or, heads bowed to deft fingertips, tested their drumheads and ravanastrons.

The climax was simple indeed. Dressed in white organdie, an exquisite little girl, recently judged the healthiest three-year-old in the United States (for it had been quickly and courteously agreed, shortly after the termination of lend-lease and Mr. Herbert Lehman's three hundred and seventy-first appeal to Congress in regard to U. N. R. R. A.'s more urgent needs, that no other nation should enter competitors), upon receiving a soft shove from her mother, a former screen star, and a whispered "Now, Lidice", toddled alone into the open, along the sulphur-pale grass, towards the great Arch, bearing in her right hand a taper which had been lighted from a light which had been taken from the light which burns eternally in Paris, above the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. At the same moment, from a small hole at dead center of the pavement beneath the Arch, (an orifice bound by a platinum facsimile of Martha Washington's wedding ring), and from the center, as well, of an embossed lucite medallion which, within a zodiacal wreath, indicated the direction of, and the air mileage to, the capital city of every civilized nation, shyly, rather the way the early worm might try the air in an especially lyrical Disney cartoon, stood up a few inches of gleaming white cord. As the child approached, her bladder a trifle unstabilized by privilege, the Cardinals, and the Monsignori and Papal Knights who served as their acolytes, could not perfectly restrain the sideward sliding of their eyes; among

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the Protestant clergymen there were several who saw what happened through the rainbow swarming of their eyelashes; the Rabbi's vocal chords thickened, necessitating a slight clearing of the throat, during which he forgot to turn from his microphone; a few even of the superbly disciplined riflemen (and women) uncrossed their eyes from the muzzles of their weapons; one of the musicians permitted his instrument, a tuba, to emit a strangled expletive; a boy on the outskirts of the great crowd could be heard hawking Good Humors, which were not moving very satisfactorily, for the day was chilly; a woman, moaning, fainted, falling double over the rope; and an Eagle Scout, masterfully brocaded with Merit Badges fiercely repeating to himself his terrifying last-minute change of instructions (for it had been decided only in afterthought, in bitter and desperate haste), "*No! No! Not* Taps! *Not* Taps!", raised his bugle to his beardless, though freshly, and electrically, shaven lips.

And now the child stooped, in one of the more rudimentary postures of ballet, and, extending her sanctified taper, touched the bright cord with the flame; and in the exquisite silence there began, audible even to the distant boy who stopped saying Good Humor in the middle of the first syllable, a faint, searching, rustling noise, not unlike that which a snake elicits as he retires among dead leaves. And now, while the musicians poised their instruments and the marksmen slanted their rifles upward; and while the Cardinals slowed or accelerated a little as need be, in order to reach their genuflections, and the threshing of the bells, at the precisely proper moment; and while, in New York, the Maestro held one hundred and seventeen instruments and nine hundred and forty-three pairs of eyes suspended as by one spider-thread from the tip of his baton; and while the woman who had fainted was softly and quickly shunted towards the rear of the crowd; and while the voice of America's Number One Commentator continued its description, in such expert unobtrusiveness that although he was thrillingly audible to every one among the millions in his unseen audience, not a single person among the onlookers could hear a word he said, though nearly all were straining with all their strength, in order that they might know what was happening before they read it in the late editions, which were even now being purchased along the periphery of the crowd; while all these things were transpiring, or held themselves balanced intense in readiness, trembling, the chosen Scout, who in innumerable rehearsals had perfected a rendition of Taps so heartrending that, in recorded form, with hummed accompaniment by Bing Crosby, the Andrews Sisters, the Ink Spots, and the Westminster Choir, it had already sold better than a million disks, did as best he could, disconsolately, lacking rehearsals, with Reveille, which he had had no occasion to play since Camp broke up the previous summer, and which many people agreed he managed really very prettily, considering the circumstances. As his last note melted, the twenty marksmen fired the first of their twenty-one salutes, flicking the silver-gilt padlocks from a long rank of cages which exhaled a brilliant flock of homing doves, somewhat frustrated in their breathing by wired-on, imitation olive-branches, and banded with appropriate messages with which, after wheeling briefly, luminous against the clouds, they set off in haste for the several and all-inclusive quarters of the globe; the Cardinals genuflected; their bells threshed; the Rabbi collapsed his microphone stand and smoothed his hair; the woman who had fainted opened her eyes, gazed up the sharp chins of sympathizers and, with a heartsick groan, miscarried; the clergymen rose from their knees and carefully folded and pocketed their handkerchiefs; the Good Humor salesboy resumed business; and in perfect synchronization the military bands of forty-six nations and the National Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra and the Westminster Choir attacked respectively their respective national anthems and their continuation of the Choral Symphony, all somewhat modified, in the interests of euphony, by Morton Gould, but virtually all still recognizable to the untrained ear; and the iridescent veil, its release cords pulled, on a signal from James Bryant Conant, by the President of the United States, Charles De Gaulle, a reluctant veteran of the Chinese Purchasing Commission, and undersecretaries from the Embassies of the other two of the Big Five, sank laboring on the March air from the crest of the Arch, revealing, in Basic English, the words:

THIS IS IT

A soft cheer of awe moved upon the crowd; then a flowering of applause like the rumination of leaves before rain: for this secret had been successfully kept, and very few of those on the outskirts had managed to buy extras until the veil fell.

Below the legend, the Eternal Fuse continued to extrude and to consume itself, one inch above the pavement, at the rate of one inch per second. The fuse was chemically calculated continuously somewhat to intensify the noise of its consumption, enough to be distinguishable to anyone who kept attentive vigil for so much as twenty-four hours; at the end of precisely one hundred years, it was further calculated, this penetrating whisper, grown continuously more acute but never dynamically more loud, would become audible at the point most distant from its origin, on the planet. Some stayed, now, and held vigil; others, many, listened a half hour, even an hour, then lost patience; slowly, towards the early neons, the crowd dissolved. Few were left, at dusk, to witness the lowering and folding of the flags.

DURING the earlier stages of planning the Memorial there had been considerable discussion whether the fuse should burn down at the rate of an inch per hour, or even per day; but an inch per second had ultimately been agreed on not only as peppier and somehow more in keeping, but also because this rate of consumption measurably helped solve, or at least proved awareness of, certain delicate social and economic problems. Some 7,200 feet of the fuse would be consumed each day; approximately 4,897.6 miles, which amounted to roughly 322.17 bales of cotton, each year. The cotton would be the finest Egyptian long-staple, grown by members of a Sharecropper Rehabilitation Project in one of the richest of the condemned areas of the Delta. Bales would be furnished, alternately, by a white and a Negro family, and would be purchased at cost, the cash to be applied against the interest on Rehabilitation Loans. The purchase of the chemicals used in impregnating the fuse, a mere few tons of those substances so recently and abruptly rendered obsolete for military use, was to be sure a mere

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token, but as such it assured various embarrassed manufacturers of archaic munitions of the Government's enduring sympathy, and concern for their welfare. Moreover, the manufacture of the fuse itself made gainful and honorable employment available to a number of persons otherwise unemployable, and added no little not only to the symbolic dignity but also to the human warmth of the entire Project. For beneath the Arch, in a small, air-conditioned, irradiated workshop so ingeniously contrived by Norman Bel Geddes that it was possible for those who found it more efficient to do their share from hospital beds or even, a few of them, from streamlined baskets, the fuse was manufactured on the spot. Its creators, who were by unanimous agreement among those in charge of the Memorial called Keepers of the Flame, worked perpetually, wheeled in and out, as shifts changed, through silent tunnels of tile and plastic, by women physicians who had been rendered redundant by the termination of hostilities. They were at all times visible, even while they slept, to tourists who used other tunnels, through thick walls of polarized glass. The tourists' admission fees, even though ex-servicemen and children in arms were to be passed at half price for the next two years, would clearly better than pay both the initial cost and the maintenance of the Project; the surplus monies were to be applied towards the relief of those who should have neglected to redeem their War and Victory Bonds by 1950.

One of these twelve-hour shifts (for the work was light) was composed of such disabled winners of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Congressional Medal of Honor, and the Navy Cross, as did not wish to be a burden on their communities or to languish in Veterans' Hospitals, and as were alert to the immense therapeutic value of honest work. It was required of them only that they wear their uniforms and decorations, during working hours, and, as a reminder and incentive to youth, show their wounds, scars, or stumps. They were paid whatever their rank and injury entitled them, in pension. The other shift was composed of depreciated but surviving collaborators in the experiments at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who had been forgiven, and were, indeed, aside from a few unfortunate incidents which marred the course of their journey across the less progressive reaches of the nation, treated with marked civility, even being permitted to shake hands with the Secretaries of State and of War, who laughingly apologized, through an interpreter, for wearing radiation-proof gloves and masks throughout the little ceremony. There had at first been some talk of accepting, for this work, only such Japanese as embraced Christianity, but it was generously decided, in the interests of religious toleration, that this should not be required; indeed, a number of the Nagasaki colleagues, formerly Christian, were known to have renounced Christianity; it was an open secret, even, that two of them were privately practising the outlawed Shintoism. This too (though care was taken that the fact should not become known among the general public) was smilingly disregarded, on the grounds that in their present occupation, and distance from the homeland, and fewness in number—not to mention the efficiency of the magnificently trained Project Guardians—no great harm was likely to come of these atavist diehards. It was required of the Japanese only that they keep on display, during working hours, those strange burns which have excited, in Americans, so much friendly curiosity—an exposure necessarily limited, of course, in a number of cases, in the interests of decency. These Japanese were paid the wages customary for prisoners of war (the funds were deposited in their names in a Subtreasury vault, their board and keep being deductible) and, in accordance with the rulings of the Geneva Convention, were required, in their eating, to fare neither better, nor worse, nor other, than men in our own armed services, being forced, in fact, to ingest one can of K Rations, two 4-pound porterhouse steaks, one carton of Camels, eight squares of Ex-Lax, two boxes of Puffed Rice, the juice of twelve oranges, a tin of Spam, a cup of Ovaltine, a prophylactic, a tube of nationally advertised toothpaste, and macerated or liquefied overseas editions of *Time*, *Readers' Digest* and the New Testament, each, per day, plus roast beef, apple pie and store cheese on Sundays and proper supplements, including third helpings, spoonlickings and ejaculations of "Gosh, Mom", of the special dishes traditionally appropriate to the major Holidays; all to be administered orally, rectally, or by intravenous injection, as best befitted the comfort of the individual patient—a task which many of the little fellows found so embarrassing, and which the tourists found so richly amusing to watch, that even after the first few days, feeding time created something of a traffic problem.

It was agreed that in due course these invalids would be supplanted at their jobs by their children if they should prove capable of breeding and bearing them, and that such children, if their behavior should prove unexceptionable up to the age of 21 years, would be granted the privileges of American citizenship and of absentee voting. The male children of those veterans capable of siring them would be offered their choice between the same lifetime guarantee of gainful employment, and a scholarship at Peddie. In the event—as to some people seemed quite conceivable—that this turnover plan too rapidly diminished the personnel, it had already been arranged that the Japanese and American ranks be filled out respectively by Mission converts to any one of the accredited Christian faiths, and by divinity students, who would receive fullcourse seminarial credits for their services per year, tuition halved.

Raw materials were conveyed to these workers each midnight, promptly, by armored truck. Before the day of the ceremony they had produced a spool of fuse so thick that it was decided to give them a holiday. In the morning, on the White House Back Lawn, there was a picnic, with a sack race, and a baseball game (won, amusingly enough, by the Japanese). In the afternoon they were all brought to reserved areas (segregating, however, the Japanese and Americans) at the very brink of the ropes, to witness the Dedication.

ONE pathetic incident marred this otherwise perfect day. One of the more elderly of those scientists who contributed their genius towards the perfecting of the bomb—he shall, in these columns at least, remain nameless—had begun, not long after the Japanese surrender, to strike his colleagues as a little queer in the head. He was known to have attended Mass, at first secretly, then quite openly; later, to have spent several evenings of silence among the Friends; later, to have sought out a poet of his acquaintance, of

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whom, it has been learned, he asked Mahatma Gandhi's postal address, whether a letter might be kindly received, and answered, and approximately how far into the East it might be advisable to journey, insofar as possible on foot, or on his knees ("perhaps to Lhasa?" he asked), in what he called "atonement". The poet, according to his own account of this singular interview, merely laughed uproariously, murmuring some obscurantist figure of speech—which with great amusement he repeated, when questioned by friends of the scientist—about "locking the stable after the horse had been stolen". It was not long after this—early in October—that plans for the Arch began to develop. Once the scientist learned of the idea of the underground personnel he did not rest, or indeed let any of his associates or of their contacts among the officials rest, until he had gained permission to become one of the Keepers. This was granted him the more reluctantly because he insisted on working with the Japanese shift and, to the further embarrassment of everyone, gave warning that he would refuse to eat the carefully balanced diet offered the Japanese, preferring, rather, just so much boiled unpolished rice per day as he could hold in the palm of one hand. In view of his immense services to humanity, and out of a kind of pity, and a perhaps overconscientious sense that the community as a whole, having so greatly benefited through him, shared, in some measure no matter how small or indirect, a certain responsibility, or at least concern, for his broken mind, it was, after prolonged consultation with eminent psychologists, agreed that he should be humored. Unfortunately, the best will in the world, on the part of those officially and medically responsible, was not, as it turned out, enough.

In the course of those "Arch Prevues", so-called, which many readers will have glimpsed in the newsreels, it became painfully clear that it was entirely unfeasible to permit him to persist in his wish. It was not that the Japanese misbehaved; indeed, they left the old man severely alone. It was, rather, the behavior of the physicist himself, and the disturbing effect of his behavior upon Prevue tourists. Although the thick glass rendered him inaudible, it was only too clear, to the more observant of these onlookers, that as he worked he spoke, and that his speech was evidently a terrible blended stream of self-vilification and of pr-y-r. And even to those insufficiently accustomed to these retrogressive attitudes to decipher them correctly (for many thought, as they put it, that he was "just cussing out the Japs"), it was nevertheless excruciatingly embarrassing to see a white man working among those of a different pigmentation, and to see how, so often as the limited gestures necessary to his work permitted him, he tore at his thin hair and beat his bruised face with clenched fists and tore at it with his nails, and to see how at all times his bitten lips bled copiously onto his starched laboratory jacket, immediately soiling it, regardless of its ever more frequent change; and how his torn face was wet with continuous, uncontrolled (and perhaps uncontrollable) tears. Some took to rapping on the glass with coins to draw his attention, then, according to their wont, either jeering at him by gestures of their hands and by contortions of their faces, or attempting to revive his courage and self-esteem by showing in their faces, or by making the sign of Victory and smiling their sympathy, or by clasping and shaking their hands and grinning, that however regrettable his present plight they continued to honor and to befriend and to congratulate him, in view of his past achievements. Such gestures, however, appeared to offend the Japanese, and were discouraged by the Guards. Others of the spectators passed on quickly in revulsion; and that too, in its own way, impaired the intended dignity, charm and decorum of the exhibit. Still others, however, and in considerable numbers, blocked the tourists' tunnel by following the example of one young soldier who, late in the afternoon before the Dedication, quite without warning fell to his knees and burst into tears. To be sure, few of his imitators wept; most of them, indeed, and this was especially true of those at the edge of the sudden crowd, did not know what was happening, and knelt only because they saw that those ahead of them were kneeling. Scrupulously conducted interviews immediately following the disturbance, in which prominent churchmen and psychiatrists were assisted by Gallup Poll experts, thoroughly established the fact that the soldier himself, despite his many campaign-stars and decorations for valor, was a psychoneurotic, that virtually nobody had understood the cause of his outburst, and that nothing whatever need be feared, notwithstanding the insistence of certain evangelistic types, in the way of a so-called "religious revival". Even so, the kneeling was of itself an irregular and far from convenient action; the more so because for every tourist who, out of a courteous desire to do what was expected of him, dropped to his knees, there were at least two others (2.29, by the Gallup count) who, mistaking this for some kind of vulgar sentimentality, in natural impatience and contempt, and no little anger, clambered among and through and over the close-packed kneelers, creating a severe jam and, ultimately, a mild panic; for an overwrought woman at the far edge of the commotion screamed that the Japanese had broken loose, others took up the cry, and those in front of the exhibit split and bruised the unbreakable glass in their effort to protect their women-folk. (The Japanese, it must be said, were entirely innocent in this affair.) From this confusion many of all types, kneelers, non-kneelers, defenders and defended alike, emerged with minor contusions, and instituted suits against the Arch Authority for damage to their nerves, clothing, and earning power. Such are the unfortunate effects of a single man's unbridled individualism.

It was at the end of this shift, accordingly, at midnight, that the physicist was told, in all possible kindliness, that his services, greatly as they were appreciated, would no longer be required, and that he had his choice of lifelong residence and treatment, gratis, in whatever sanitarium in the nation he might prefer. Instantly he stopped his crying and asked, in a manner which seemed entirely rational, whether he might not, before retiring, have at least the privilige of throwing that switch, in the underground workshop, which would start the fuse on its eternal journey. He did not like to think, he said, that any one of his fellow-workers would be deprived of his day off, or of witnessing the climactic moment from the best point of vantage possible. Such was the unworldliness of the man, that it had not occurred to him that this was, after all, a crucial part of the ceremony; in fact, a switch had been arranged on the Number One Platform (its knob set with the Hope Diamond, on loan, and heavily insured for the occasion); and it was to be thrown—since both Drs. Albert Einstein

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and Lise Meitner had declined the honor—by Major General Leslie Groves. It was decided not to embarrass the poor old man. Quickly, by telephone, the General's magnanimous withdrawal was secured; the scientist was then told that everyone would be delighted, and honored, if he would consent to "start the ball rolling", as they said, in a position of the greatest possible conspicuousness and eminence. Courteously, even gratefully, he replied that he really preferred to be underground. After careful consultation, it was deemed entirely harmless to grant his wish—a decision which, as nobody could have foreseen, was to prove tragically ill-advised.

Within a few minutes after the Dedication, he was found next the great spool, dead by his own hand (by prussic acid); it was deduced that he must have swallowed the poison in the instant of throwing the switch. Pinned to his immaculate laboratory jacket was a note, written clearly and steadily in his own hand.

Out of deference to the deceased and to his surviving relatives, it was instantly and unanimously agreed not to publish this short, singular document (though qualified students will be granted access to it), whose contents could only puzzle and offend sane human beings, and establish beyond possible question the piteous derangement of a man of former genius. By rough paraphrase, however, it seems not dishonorable to say that in unimpeachable sincerity he regarded his suicide as obligatory—as, indeed, a kind of religious or ethical "sacrifice", through which he hoped to endow the triumphal monument with a new and special significance and, through the gradual spread and understanding of that significance, once more (as he thought) to assist the human race.

Even in death, however, this unfortunate but brilliant man again made history. Psychoanalysts are even now busy exploring the hidden depths of the already celebrated case; the nation's leading philosophers are rushing a symposium to be entitled *The New New Failure of Nerve;* and clergymen of all denominations, united in agreement perhaps more firmly than ever before, are determined to preach next Sunday (and, if need be, on the following Sunday as well), using this tragic incident by no means unsympathetically yet sternly, and with controlled ridicule, as an object-lesson, and grave admonition, to such in their spiritual charge as find themselves for any reason of pride, or a thirst for undue publicity, liable to the grievous error of exaggerated scrupulousness. "Some things are best left to Jesus Christ", will be the burden of their argument; the text will be, *Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.*

The body will be interred, with military honors, at the centre of that area in New Mexico in which this gifted scientist, and his colleagues, first saw the light of the New Age. And it does not seem too much to hope that perhaps he will be remembered, not, surely, as he had intended, yet a little wistfully, in the sound of The Fuse itself as it increases upon the world. For misguided and altogether regrettable though his last days were—a sad warning indeed to those who turn aside from the dictates of reason, and accept human progress reluctantly—he was, nevertheless, perhaps, our last link with a not-too-distant past in which such conceptions as those of "atonement", and "guilt", and "individual responsibility", still had significance. And, in a sense, his gift to mankind was greater, perhaps, than that of his more stable colleagues. For, though "sacrifice" is a word to be used only with apologies, it would be hard to define what, if anything, they "sacrificed" in the giving; but he gave up his sanity.

FRENCH LETTER

WITH the departure of de Gaulle, the aim to "raise France to the level of the Big Three" has been given up—at least for as long as international power relationships remain the same. The catastrophic situation of France today has forced the renunciation of all dreams of "greatness", with a large and well-equipped army as proclaimed by de Gaulle and the MRP. For the moment the problem is to subsist and nothing else is left than to accept for a time the role of a small power. The MRP was obviously not fit to head a government which had to inaugurate the new trend. Nor was it possible for the CP to head the new government, since this party also had proclaimed over and over again the necessity for France to rearm "in order that she militarily be worthy of her great Russian allies". Thorez, who still a few weeks ago exhorted the workers to produce more and better cannons, now has grudgingly agreed that some munition factories be converted to the production of tractors.

The Socialists alone stand for the development of a strong industrial potential first, and proclaim that such industrial strength later will permit the building of military forces. Thus the Socialists quite naturally were those who had to assume the presidency since they could accept the necessity of a massive reduction in military expenditures in order to achieve saner financial and economic conditions.

The man who really dominates the government is not its official head but rather André Philip, Minister of Finances and of National Economy. Though he has followed all the different political twists and turns of his party in the post-liberation period, he is notable in that he had a clearly outlined program long before liberation. He first thought that he could accomplish this program in utilizing the prestige of de Gaulle, but turned against the General when he felt that the latter no longer followed his advice. He waited for his "hour", and now thinks it has come. (When he campaigned for the first time for parliament in the early thirties, he declared privately: "God needs me in the government"). Still young, only 43 years of age, he comes from the Christian-Socialists, a protestant-socialistic movement within which he represented the extreme Left. Until 1942—when he left France for London—he was a professor of political economy at Lyons University, and on Sundays he transformed himself into a preacher in the protestant churches of the suburbs of Lyons. He has outstanding capacities and also the energy needed to redress a financial and economic situation—as the reactionary Poincaré did 20 years ago.

But if Philip stresses in his program the need for an accelerated tax on wealth and for certain nationalizations, this has nothing whatsoever to do with internationalist or revolutionary aims.

Philip plans first to cut down budgetary expenses and to block prices and wages so as to stop the inflationary process. But this he considers can only be brought about through increased production. Philip figures that the bal-

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ancing of the budget will re-establish confidence among the moneyed interests and that capital will again be attracted into industry. He is also convinced that in order to gain the confidence of owners of unemployed capital funds, the latter must be assured that nationalization will not be continued once certain clearly defined sectors of the economy have been taken over by the state. His idea is that after the utilities, certain insurance companies and private banks, some mines and parts of the merchant marine have been nationalized, the process should be ended and the country should go on with a permanent mixed economy.

On the other hand, it is hardly possible to really start production if the most elementary needs of the workers cannot be satisfied. Thus the government prepares the mass production of certain indispensable consumption goods at low prices. It is also vitally necessary that the farmers discontinue their strike of production, that they consent again to deliver their goods to the towns through regular and not through black-market channels. But this again is possible only if there are enough agricultural goods to allow regular distribution through normal channels. If goods are too scarce they quite naturally feed the black market in preference to regular channels. It is here that the United States come in. France needs the help of the U.S. to subsist. This is why Leon Blum now goes to Washington in the same role in which Lord Keynes and Churchill went earlier. The French government is desperately in need of consumption goods, raw materials and machine tools. The future of the Gouin government thus depends on the reception it will get in the United States.

There is still another condition for the success of the government. Social Peace must be maintained at all cost and the union bureaucracy must be able to divert the mass desire for strike action. The government needs working-class support for its aims. In this respect, the government has had a rather bad start. Its first measures were to increase the prices of tobacco (by 25%) of railroad transportation (by 40%), and of wine, while at the same time freezing all wages. CP and SFIO leaders nevertheless hope to create a mass feeling in support of the government by telling the workers that this is a cabinet led "by their own men" which will continue to nationalize and drastically cut military expenses. But though this last measure is especially popular, labor wants to see it translated immediately into an amelioration of economic conditions. As to the nationalizations, the masses have lost all interest since they have realized that nationalizing of industry has in no way altered their conditions.

While there was some new hope after the departure of de Gaulle it has already subsided by now and the feeling of frustration and deception is stronger than ever. The workers are disgusted not only with the government but also with the leadership of their parties and unions. In certain unions, more than 50% of the members refused to pay dues. Union meetings are very poorly attended. There is a great fatigue even in the ranks of the CP. But the SFIO naturally suffers most from these developments since it has to bear the main responsibility for the measures of the government and has had to call off its recently inaugurated policy which made it appear as the true champion of working-class interests. Recent by-elections near Paris for the seat of a Communist deputy who had died, resulted in a victory of the MRP—this is certainly a danger signal.

There exists, however, not only frustration and discouragement. Trotskyist and syndicalist groups, groups of former members of Marceau Pivert's PSOP, have recently gained new force. New little groups of a political or of a more intellectual character, less ossified in their thinking, have sprung up here and there. These groups most of the time have as yet no connection with each other and are still groping towards new ideas, new ways.

France is an impoverished country, with obsolete and worn-out industrial and agricultural equipment. Whatever its political structure, modernization and rebuilding will be necessary. So long as these aims are pursued within the framework of the national state, a standard of living below the pre-war level is certain; the masses will bear the main burden of the effort to raise France once again to the level of a great power. The policies now being pursued differ from those of classical capitalism in that they assume responsibility for employment of all the workers at wages that will yield them a minimum standard of living. But this standard is no more than a bare subsistence; even so modest an advance as the restoration of the 40-hour week is out of the question. The policy of the three parties now running the government is one of *national* reconstruction and can only mean continued suffering by the masses ("sacrifices"), with an ultimate perspective of a "strong" France choosing its side in the next war.

To avoid all this, it would not be enough to accelerate anti-capitalist measures. Even more important would be the changing of the framework within which these measures take place, from a national to an international one. Only international action for such aims as a socialist "United States of Europe" (including Germany) can really accomplish anything for the French people. The critical spirit now growing among French workers will become a positive factor only if they integrate their struggle for immediate demands against capital into a general fight for a new world.

GELO AND ANDREA

OVERFED AMERICA (Cont'd.)

Overall dollar volume for all segments of the food industry "will probably hit an alltime high of $32 billions" during 1946, Gene Flack, advertising director of the Loose Wiles Biscuit Co. predicted yesterday at the annual convention of the National Association of Waste Material Dealers. . . . He disclosed that sales of his company have "just about trebled" since Pearl Harbor.

—"N.Y. Times", March 19.

LET US AT ALL COSTS AVOID UTOPIANISM.

If the UNO is to live and grow, its members must practice tolerance. . . . Criticism does not mean slander. Charges of warmongering, tyranny and bad faith should be backed by proof or not be made from now on.

But it would be utopian to ask nations voluntarily to end slander. Individuals are protected against domestic slander and libel by national law. Why should not individuals and peoples be protected against international slander and libel by international law?

The Commission on Human Rights of the social and Economic Council is about to meet, to prepare a World Bill of Rights for the Assembly. We propose that these rights should include protection against slander and libel, written into statutory law by the Assembly and enforced by the International Court of Justice, before which individuals and states would appear to present their cases.

—Proposal made by the Realistic and Constructive editors of "The New Republic" in a lead editorial, April 1.

WITH THE HEAVY THINKERS: DEPARTMENT OF DEMOCRATIC SAFETY & PRACTICABILITY

Most of the reforms being sought by the Non-European Unity Committee of South Africa are highly desirable, but to demand the vote for all men and women of all races is impracticable. . . . The natives in the Union number 7,500,000 compared to 2,000,000 Europeans. Could control of the country be safely handed over to these people? . . . Could one expect primitive Africans living in grass huts to weigh the pros and cons of the intricate affairs of modern politics—support of the UNO, for example?

—Marjorie Fleming, staff correspondent of "Worldover Press", March 20.

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Ancestors (2)

De Tocqueville

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our new 40-page format makes it possible to resume the "Ancestors" series which was begun last October with Proudhon. The purpose of the series is to bring to the attention of radicals today articles by and about past thinkers whose ideas are relevant to our problems.

Next in the series will be Tolstoy's remarkable little essay, "Modern Science."

Prophet of the Total State

THE trend toward the totalitarian state would be less powerful and of less importance for the future of Western Civilization if it were merely the outcome of the cumulative impact of economic problems. Yet the world economic crisis is only the basis on which an older tendency is making new and rapid progress. The French sociologist, Alexis de Tocqueville, recognized this tendency a century ago.* To him the most significant trait of modern history was the rational domination of society by the centralized state power which had reached its first peak with the seventeenth century's absolutism. In the absolute monarchies, the central executive power took over the functions of town communities, guilds, and corporations and destroyed their power. Before the 17th century, all power was broken into fragments. With the rise of the modern state, concentration of power began to develop. The steady growth of this tendency concerned Tocqueville in all his writings.

While the whole world lived under the impression that the capitalistic society with free enterprise, free trade, personal freedom, equal rights, and free elections had done away with state absolutism, Tocqueville was convinced that the Western world was drifting toward a much more powerful absolutism and that liberalism was not a hindrance but a compellent force in this development. He realized that the growing feeling of privacy and individualism around him was dissolving all community spirit and consequently rendered necessary a more centralized administration. To him it seemed quite obvious that in a competitive society man is compelled to accept what Veblen called "the private and acquisitive point of view" and that therefore all forms of self-administration would disappear. "Hence such men can never, without an effort, tear themselves from their private affairs to engage in public business; their natural bias leads them to abandon the latter to the sole visible and permanent representative of the interests of the community, that is to say, to the state." The more, however, everybody sticks to his own business, the more the general interest becomes the business of a class of experts on whom the mass of the people have to rely. Therefore, Tocqueville said: "In proportion as the duties of the central power are augmented, the number of public officials by whom that power is represented must increase also. They form a nation in each nation . . . and more and more fill up the place of aristocracy." His conception of the most important tendency in modern society can be summed up as follows: We "are constantly disputing as to the hands in which supremacy is to be vested, but readily agree upon the duties and rights of that supremacy". "Democratic nations often hate those in whose hands the central power is vested, but they always love that power itself."

The general reliance on the government and the individualistic propensity to take care of one's personal affairs only brings about a general apathy which will allow the executive power to become oppressive. Having this view, Tocqueville predicted: "If the rulers of democratic nations were either to neglect to correct this fatal tendency or to encourage it from a notion that it weans men from political passions and thus wards off revolutions, they might eventually produce the evil they seek to avoid, and a time might come when the inordinate passions of a few men, aided by unintelligent selfishness or the pusillanimity of the greater number, would ultimately compel society to pass through strange vicissitudes."

A hundred years later, Lewis Mumford discussing the rise of fascism in *The Condition of Man*, found that "passive barbarism opened the gates to active barbarism".

It was this double tendency of concentration of power and growth of political apathy which induced Tocqueville to view despotism as a peculiar thread in our liberal society and to forecast that finally all Christian nations would end in a despotism which had nothing to equal it in oriental society since the range of power of the old despots was limited through the independence of communities and remote provinces. The new despotic state, however, would be able for the first time in history to administer by a central agency, and without the assistance of intermediate powers, a great empire. Its power would be unlimited since millions of individuals who stand apart in solitary weakness are nothing but human dust. Such a modern despotism, once established among Western people, he said, "would eventually strip each of them of several of the highest qualities of humanity".

It is true, admitted Tocqueville, that the people of our epoch believe that personal freedom can be maintained because they possess the right to vote. Yet servitude starts in small things. Political freedom does not mean too much, when the people cannot administer the smallest affairs by themselves. Unexperienced in any administrative business, the citizen in a modern democracy is asked to assume responsibility through the ballot for complicated matters which he neither understands nor can really influence by mere voting. "It is indeed difficult to conceive how men who have entirely given up the habit of self-government should succeed in making a proper choice of those by whom they are to be governed . . ." These people, he predicted, will exhaust all systems of voting and finally find themselves under the sway of a dictator, whose rational and efficient administrative system will distinguish his dictatorship from all those of the past. In the modern dictator "a sort of merging between the attitude of the clerk and the soldier will take place."

These astonishing insights are contained mostly in the second volume (Books III and IV) of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. It is ironical that, because of its

**Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville. The Henry Reeve Text as revised by Francis Bowen; now further corrected and edited with introduction, editorial notes, and bibliographies by Phillips Bradley, 2 vol. 1945, Alfred A. Knopf. $7.50.

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famous description of the young United States, it has always been the *first* volume that everybody reads and quotes, while the much deeper speculations of the second volume remain comparatively unknown. Perhaps only today, when so much of what Tocqueville dared to predict in that volume is becoming a hideous reality, can its full import be understood. For this reason, his century-old analysis of the totalitarian trend seems much more realistic and timely today than current best-sellers like Hayek's book.

According to the mechanistic view of Hayek and others the totalitarian state is a mere political superstructure in a planned economy. These authors have forgotten that the violent mass movements, which have become the basis for the totalitarian regimes we have so far known, were products of the crisis of our market economy, and that these regimes after having destroyed political freedom introduced economic planning as part of their total social technique. It is obviously not economic *planning* but economic *crisis* which drives nations on the way to serfdom.

It was not Tocqueville's opinion that what he called "the road to servitude" would be inevitable but he was convinced that the 19th century form of democracy was transient only, since inequality cannot be maintained in a democracy. "The nations of our time", he wrote, "cannot prevent the conditions of men from becoming equal, but it depends upon themselves whether the principle of equality is to lead them to servitude or freedom. . . . For the principle of equality begets two tendencies: the one leads men straight to independence and may suddenly drive them into anarchy; the other conducts them by a longer, more secret, but more certain road to servitude."

This latter tendency seemed so strong to Tocqueville because all political events since the 17th century have resembled each other in one respect: they weakened or destroyed the *"pouvoirs sécondaires"*, the intermediate powers. The notion of *"pouvoirs sécondaires"* is most important in Tocqueville's historical conception.

Medieval society had been characterized by the interplay of such "secondary powers". True, the individual was still fettered but within his own caste or community he could take part in vital decisions and could express himself. In his *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, Tocqueville has shown how up to the end of the 17th century communities existed where the freely-elected magistrats were responsible to the people and where an active public life prevailed. But then from one end of Europe to the other the absolute monarchy abolished not only the privileges of the nobility but also the liberties of the cities. Revolution and counter-revolution which followed continued this job. Both transferred social functions once exerted by communities, guilds, religious orders, or local authorities into the hands of a central executive power. "Napoleon fell, but his most substantial work remained. His government died but his administration continued to live and whenever since then people have wanted to crush the absolute power, they have merely put the head of liberty on to a servile body."

The perishing of the *pouvoirs sécondaires*—the guilds, communities, estates—on the one hand and the abolishing of feudal privileges on the other created a new world, and Tocqueville concluded: "A new science of politics is needed for a new world". The sociological approach distinguished him from other contemporary writers critical of the new society. The "Theocrats"—de Maistre, Bonald and Lamenais—had also realized what the destruction of the traditional institutions meant, but they were romantic reactionaries who believed in the restoration of the past. The utopian Socialists, on the other hand, invented new institutions which had little connection with reality. Tocqueville found "the question is not how to reconstruct aristocratic society, but how to make liberty proceed out of that democratic state of society in which God has placed us". In contrast to the Theocrats, he was convinced that the gradual development of equality was a providential fact and had not yet come to an end. "Can it be believed", he asked, "that the democracy which has overthrown the feudal system and vanquished kings will retreat before the bourgeoisie and the rich?" But he emphasized that equality is only one side of democracy and worthless without freedom. Yet freedom can only be maintained if new institutions, able to allot creative social tasks to individuals, replace those destroyed in the long process of concentration of power.

"Pouvoirs sécondaires" means decentralization of functions. Although Tocqueville did not deny the advantage of central administration, he was aware that if intermediate powers could not stop the centralization of functions, mankind could not avoid a new despotism which "would provide for security, facilitate our pleasure, direct our industry and spare us all the care of thinking."

Tocqueville conceived these intermediate powers as voluntary associations of citizens which would not replace central administration but limit the range of its power. He abstained, however, from drawing any blue-print. Able to foresee that one day society would have to choose between free institutions and totalitarian servitude, he believed that to give a warning was all that could be done in his life time. The political decision would come much later. "I am", he wrote to a friend, "a liberal of a new kind and will not confuse myself with the majority of the democrats of our time".

Today it looks as if we are driven by a blindly cumulative causation towards totalitarianism. But the countermovement has become visible too. Democratic "secondary powers" have appeared in all moments of political crisis. Whether they have taken the form of workers' councils or committees of national liberation, they represented an attempt to create institutions of self-administration. These attempts have been defeated, it is true, but a new trend in history does not assert itself successfully in a few years. The reasons for this defeat cannot be examined here, but one of them certainly is that Tocqueville's insight into the nature of modern society has not yet become general knowledge. We can only take new roads if we know the terrain over which we march.

SEBASTIAN FRANCK

Is a Revolutionary War a Contradiction in Terms?

A Letter from "European"

IN his article, "Why Politics?", in the first issue of POLITICS, Dwight Macdonald sketches out his attitude towards the Soviet Union and the war that was then in process. The notion of "bureaucratic collectivism" as a third alternative to capitalism and socialism seems to me perfectly right, and clearly defined. The attitude toward the war, on the other hand, appears difficult to found on a consistent line of reasoning.

It might be that war, whatever its motives and aims, is an essentially unacceptable fact from a socialist point of view.

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At the same time, since we are living men, inescapably involved in the common fate of our fellow men, we cannot "simply draw aside and say: it's none of our business". But then one should add that it will be forever impossible to find in war any element whatsoever of "our business". We can submit to fate with dignity; save our own soul, help a few friends to save theirs. But that will be all.

After having justly refused to accept as legitimate an attitude of "critical support", the Editor goes on to say that "The proper policy would have been to insist on taking the fight against Hitler into the hands of the workers".

It would seem as if, at this point, the "hands of the workers" helped us to slip from reality into phraseology. The brave workers are millions of men and women who, we have every right to assume, yearn for truth and justice, and (in moments of great fervor) are fully capable of facing the cruellest tortures rather than submit to slavery. But, *at the present moment,* it may be a bit demagogical merely on the basis of some ideal image concerning their "historical mission" to attribute to them real competence in the art of government, State affairs, and the handling of several other technical and spiritual matters.

The struggle against Hitler, in the form it had inexorably taken in 1940, required a complex strategy of tanks, airplanes, submarines, General Staffs, armies, fifth columns; the organization of a constant and well-ordered flow of supplies to this machinery; the creation of an artificial "morale" to keep the human herd rushing onto death; the terrorisation of the conquered people; the ruthless exploitation of every ounce of human effort that could be exploited.

How could all this have been in the "hands of the workers"? By entrusting it to leaders more capable than the fascist leaders, or at least as capable as them? But then these leaders would have had to be armed with powers as wide, and practically as uncontrollable, as those of Hitler's or Stalin's lieutenants. There is not such a thing as a "socialist" (or "proletarian") way of waging war, of opposing massacre with massacre.

A revolt of the workers against Churchill in 1940 would not have involved simply the "risk of a Nazi victory", but its certainty. In time of war, a revolution (I insist, a revolution, not a coup d'Etat) is unavoidably defeatist in its effects, if not in its avowed intentions (Russia in 1917; Austria-Hungary in 1918; Italy in 1943).

No revolution is in fact possible if the State apparatus is not wrecked. Lenin thought that, while falling from the hands of the dethroned tyrants into those of the new conquerors, the apparatus would remain in fairly good working order. This has been refuted by the very experience of the Bolsheviks: for several years, Russia did not have either an army or an administration. It was precisely what made the years 1917—1922, for all their horror and suffering, years of hope and faith. The peasants did not submit to any rule except direct violence, and only as long as a detachment of Reds remained in the village; badly armed and equipped as they were (I happen to have seen something of them), Denikin's or Youdenitch's bands were able to reach the outskirts of Moscow and St. Petersburg; Makhno wielded a military power equal to that of Trotzky. Once the State, the army, the police were reconstituted, the real revolution, the ferment of the autonomous Soviets, the enthusiasm of the workers became nothing but vanishing phantoms. The same had happened to the "Jacobin conquest" in 1794, in spite of the fact that the Jacobins could rely on many experienced bourgeois administrators. War invariably kills revolution. The idea that there can be such a thing as a "revolutionary war" is based on a fundamental confusion against which Proudhon fought a losing battle. But Marx took the idea over as a matter of course from the Romantic tradition, making of it a necessary dialectical step.

"Vive la Commune de Paris—ses mitrailleuses et ses fusils" (Long live the Paris Commune—its machine-guns and its rifles)—So went the song of the Parisian workers. But precisely its machine-guns and its rifles eliminated every hope of the Paris Commune's becoming what it had wanted to be. The Commune could have defeated Versailles. The result would have been a change of insignia on barracks, Police Headquarters, jails, etc., with the possible injection of a dose of democracy (i. e., in the best hypothesis, a small amount of sloppiness) into the machinery of coercion.

If socialism has to mean a true emancipation of man, we have to start by rejecting as a major absurdity any notion of a war waged by socialists, or of a State managed in the name of socialism.

Never has a people defeated the State that oppressed it by force of arms. In *De la Guerre et de la Paix,* Proudhon distinguished the kind of force that is at play in modern society, and in a real revolution, from the brutal Force that decides wars between nations, which he considered a relic of barbarism.

In all successful revolutions, the decisive factor has been a "moral" or "psychological" one—the one thanks to which the always superior armament of the State has been rendered useless. If the guns of the Bastille had fired, July 14th, 1789, in Paris, would have been the same as January 22, 1905, in St. Petersburg. In March, 1917, the Cossacks refused to charge the people. If the soldiers of the Duke of Ragusa had obeyed their Marshal, the Three Glorious Day of 1830 would have ended like the sorrowful days of June, 1848.

There is not a single example of the people's being victorious against a force organized by the State and ready to support the rulers. What I myself have seen of the evacuation of Southern France by the Germans, and what I have heard of the evacuation of Paris and of Milan by the same, confirms such an opinion. The Spanish guerrillas against Napoleon would have met the same fate as the Vendee, had Wellington not been there with his regular soldiers and his gold. A guerrilla force on its own—that is Warsaw in August, 1944.

This illusion of an insurrection victorious by force of arms is similar to, and also connected with, the conventional XIX century view of "military glory". Norton Cru maintains (and he seems to be right) that we cannot get anywhere near a true picture of what Napoleon's battles really were like because all the witnesses have falsified their accounts according to the preconceived notion they had accepted of the phenomenon: "combat between two armies". The history of revolutionary combats should be revised from a similar point of view. Marx, and especially Engels (whose competence in strategic matters has been particularly admired), never conceived the possibility of looking at the fact "battle" from a point of view other than the point of view of Clausewitz. For them, such insights into the naked reality of the "historical" as Stendhal's Waterloo or Tolstoi's Austerlitz, remained entirely out of reach.

Of course, the revolution (popular insurrection, collapse of a machinery of oppression on account of the desertion of its agents) can bring in its wake a civil war, with all that a war implies of military organization, stern discipline, regular battles, etc. But it will then be the struggle between two State organizations, not that of a people against a ruling caste. On both sides, the people will get killed under the direction of a caste, old or new, of officers, generals, and political rulers. There is no doubt that, since we are

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democrats and socialists, we will be right in preferring the victory of the Lenin-Trotzky State to that of the Koltchak-Denikin State; of the Tcheka installed by Bela Kun in the Crimea to that of Wrangel's "Kontr' Rasviedka" which ravaged the same peninsula—in much the same sense as we could have preferred Grant's soldiery in New Orleans to Lee's in Kentucky. To enlist in the International Brigade in order to fight Franco's hordes might well appear to be one's imperative duty. But is there much difference between such choices and the sympathy for the Boers against Britain; for Ethiopia against Italy; for the Greeks against the Turks at Domokos in 1898; for France, not much a republic then, against Prussia, in 1871? Or, in more recent times, the anxious expectation with which we waited for General Alexander to replace Marshal Kesselring in Milan, and for a Soviet Marshal to eject a Nazi governor from Poland?

We are confronted, over and over again, with the same irreducible duality of feelings: "It is none of our business", and, nevertheless, "de nostra re agitur"—it *is* our business. . . . A *fine point for an existential* philosopher, with his subtle dialectic of being and nothingness, absolute commitment and failure, metaphysical freedom and inescapable historical situation.

Stating his point of view on the war, the Editor also wrote: "If ever there was a chance for socialism in Britain, it was in the period from Dunkirk to the fall of Tobruk".

I think that this assertion is seriously challenged by a passage from *Mass Observation*, as quoted by Mr. Orlansky (*Politics*—December, 1944): "An investigation in 1942 showed about as much criticism of the Labour Party as of the **Conservatives. Asked whether they felt that *any party*** would get things done as they wanted, 64% thought that *no* existing party would do so . . .".

When the numerical majority of a people feel so bitterly disoriented, the probability of a revolutionary explosion is very slim. Revolution always requires a long labor of great expectations, and a great deal of robust faith in certain men and in certain doctrines. The man who declares that he has no confidence in any of the existing parties is by the same token confessing to a feeling of isolation and a very poor hope that his discontent might have a positive outcome. And one should also take into account the paralysing effect of patriotic anguish—and also of anguish pure and simple—on the critical faculty of man, and on the spontaneous impulses without which no revolution is possible. Anguish had certainly a primary role in the psychology of 1940-1941. And, so far as England is concerned, one should probably admit that at no moment did the British really despair either of their fatherland or of their old institutions, and not even of their ruling class. The whole history of England makes it impossible to think of something like Blanqui's attempt—on October 31, 1870—to eject the inane Trochu and install a Committee of Public Safety. The British, if they had really lost confidence in Churchill, would have called on Stafford Cripps. And if capitalism had been replaced by something, it would certainly not have been by socialism, but rather by the "third alternative". Which "third alternative", in its turn, and whatever people might say to the contrary, is vigorously rooted in the War Communism of Lenin and Trotzky. The British people, and possibly even the wretched lib-labs, must be given some credit for not having pushed things so far as a totalitarian dictatorship.

But what we can certainly and unconditionally reproach the lib-labs for is the miserable inertia they are showing now, when confronted with the question of peace.

The situation is immeasurably worse than in 1919. Compared to the Big Three, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Wilson appear as angels of peace and wisdom. This time, the continent of Europe has been swept by something that could have become a popular revolution. This time, instead of the chauvinistic Parliament hand-picked by Lloyd George, Britain has given power to the Laborites. After the defeat of Hitler, revolutionary defeatism would have been possible, without any danger of playing into the hands of the Nazis. But the impotence of the parties, and the inert disillusionment of the peoples, are today greater than ever.

CONTRIBUTORS

Louis Clair is a German socialist who has often written for "Politics" and who contributes regularly to the "The Call" and "The Progressive". His article is based on the talk he gave at one of our discussion meetings last December . . . **Don Calhoun**, whose "Non-Violence and Revolution" appeared in our January issue, took part in the pacifist conference he analyzes; he lives in Chicago . . . **Burton Bendiner**, recently out of the Army, works in the field of labor relations. . . . **James Agee, author of** "Permit Me Voyage" and other poems, is on the editorial staff of "Time"; he also reviews movies for "The Nation." . . . **Gelo and Andrea** are socialists, living in France, who took part in the Resistance movement . . . **Sebastian Franck** is a German socialist, "graduate" of a Nazi concentration camp, who now lives in this country. . . . **European** is an editor, journalist and scholar now living in France. He took part in the 1905 Russian Revolution. Contributions by him appeared in our November and December issues. . . . **Virgil J. Vogel** is a leading member of the Socialist Party youth movement; he lives in Chicago.

Cover Picture: Detail from a photograph, by Walker Evans, of steel works in Birmingham, Alabama. Credit: Rural Resettlement Administration.

In Early Issues:

Ethel Goldwater: **The Independent Woman—a New Course**
Karl Korsch: **A Non-Dogmatic Approach to Marxism**
Lionel Abel: **The Atom Bomb, or The Infernal Machine**
Lucien Laurat: **Why European Socialists Look to America**
Anton Pannekoek: **The Failure of the Workingclass**
"European": **An Approach to Popular Culture**
Julian Ash: **Germany, 1946—Some Impressions**
George Woodcock: **The English Community Movement**
A. Dwight Culler: **Man—Piltdown to Fermi**
ANCESTORS (3): **Tolstoy's "Modern Science"**
Dwight Macdonald: **Cyprus—Case Study in Imperialism**

EVERYTHING CLEAR NOW?

The opposition also has accused the Government of a vague and ambiguous attitude in the nationalization issue. Replying to this criticism, (Swedish) Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson declared: ". . . There is nothing in the Government program which can be regarded as an expression of hostility towards enterprise. Planned economy is not identical with nationalization. The basic principle of planned economy is to feel one's way, which eliminates any possibility of outlining a definite scheme of action in advance."

—"News from Sweden", Feb. 13.

WORDS-OF-ONE-SYLLABLE DEPT.

A representative of one of the New York textile trade journals who had just returned from Japan, reported in a speech a few weeks ago that the destruction of the Japanese cotton industry had exceeded even his fondest hopes.

—"Human Events", Feb. 20.

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New Roads

Discussion

Sir:

"A Critique of Marxian Ideology" by Helen Constas, in your January issue, is, in the author's words," an attempt to examine what is wrong with the theoretical structure of Marxism." The author admits "that the necessity for basing socialism on a moral foundation does not mean that all of Marxism has to be rejected." The reexamination of the theoretical structure of Marxism is formulated in the following manner. "Marx's premise that the level of productivity and its corresponding degree of the division of labor determine class relations, and his conclusion that capitalism will of necessity be superseded by socialism are both false."

If this premise of Marx is rejected, one wonders what is left in the whole theoretical structure of Marxism, that could be utilized as a guide towards the practical solution of the problems of our time. Such a point of view would rather justify the absolute repudiation of Marxism instead of attempting to base socialism on a moral or any other foundation.

Of course, one might argue that there still remains the brilliant analysis of Marx on the basic mechanism of capitalism as well as keen insight into the workings of society. However, the formulation of an all embracing concept or of a general law of development of human society has always been regarded among the outstanding contributions of Marxian theory. Marx and Engels presented in a concise and compressed formula the relationship between the level of the productive forces of a given historical period and its social relationship as the basic moving forces of development in the whole intricate process of human history. This Marxian concept is of great importance in our time when humanity is approaching its next crossroad. It is for that reason of particular interest to examine critically the assertions of Helen Constas.

The author asks, "Why did the development of the productive forces necessarily lead from primitive communism to slave society? Why couldn't the new social wealth be enjoyed collectively as it had been previously? Precisely how and why did a given increase in the level of productivity result in class society and private property?"

No class society or private property could develop so long as human labor was unable to produce more than was absolutely necessary to provide for its own needs. Abundant historical data offers the exact answer how and why a given increase in the level of productivity resulted in class society and private property. Engels in *Anti-Duhring* (p. 267)* states:

"It [private property] already existed, even though it was limited to certain objects, in the ancient primitive communes of civilised peoples. It developed even within these communes, at first through barter with strangers, till it reached the form of commodities. The more the products of the commune assumed the commodity form, that is, the less they were produced for their producers' own use, and the more for the purpose of exchange, the more the primitive natural division of labour was replaced by exchange also within the commune, the more inequality developed in the property of the individual members of the commune, the more deeply was the ancient common ownership of the land undermined, and the more rapidly the commune developed towards its dissolution and transformation into a village of small peasants."

Helen Constas ignores the fact that the increase in the level of productivity and its corresponding degree of division of labor lead to exchange, to the transformation of products into commodities, to their accumulation and finally to the transformation of primitive communism into slavery. In the *Origin of the Family* (p. 334), Engels wrote:

"We saw above that at a rather early stage of development of production, human labour power became able to produce a considerably greater product than was necessary for the maintenance of the producers, and that this stage of production was in the main the same as that in which the division of labor and exchange between individuals made their appearance. After that it was not long before the great 'truth' was discovered that man also can be a commodity; that human strength is exchangeable and usable, by the transformation of a man into a slave. Hardly had men begun to exchange when they themselves began to be exchanged. The active became the passive whether men liked it or not."

Among other criticisms of the Marxian theory, Helen Constas states: "—at the most, the division of labor itself leads to a diversity of jobs all of which are socially equal." She ignores, in this statement, the difference *between technical and social division of labor.* It is the development of social division of labor which answers her question precisely as to why the new social wealth could not be enjoyed collectively as it had been previously under primitive communism. Engels in *Origin of the Family* (p. 317) said, "In the general historical conditions then prevailing, the first great social division of labour, with its increase of the productivity of labor and therefore of wealth, and its widening of the field of production, necessarily brought slavery in its train. From the first great social division of labour sprang the first great cleavage of society into two classes: masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited."

Helen Constas maintains, "What is important to socialists is not the level of productive forces but the relations among men. These relations are not determined by the level of productivity, and hence, they are not independent of man's will entirely." Even more so, she insists, "For us, on the contrary, socialism has always been a possibility and becomes no *more* a possibility simply because of the present technical level." To this she adds, "unfortunately, for years the socialist movement has equated increased productivity and the nationalization of property with socialism, and must now be reminded that the relations that men enter into and not the technical level are what determines socialism. Contrary to most contemporary socialists, socialism is not implied by an 'economy of abundance' or 'plenty for all'. Socialism is not a technological system, but a set of moral relationships." Furthermore, "Socialism is based on the social ownership and democratic control of the means of production, *whatever they may happen to be at any historical moment.*" The preceding statement ties in with another remark, "Mankind would never have left the social *relations* of primitive communism; humanity's history would have been merely a constant rise in productivity socially distributed on the basis of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs' ".

Now the question arises,—how would it have been possible to distribute to each one according to his needs in a society on a very low level of productivity? The productivity of primitive communism was too low to permit any form of class society and private property to develop. An

* All quotations are from *Handbook of Marxism*, International Publishers, 1935.

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increase in productivity in the next historical stage created the objective possibility for the development of a class society and private ownership. But it *was not high enough* to create the necessary objective conditions for socialism. There was little enough to distribute even far below each one's needs. It would have meant an equality of poverty and misery, a kind of "social ownership and democratic control" of scarcity which is a far cry from the real meaning of socialism.

This also answers our critic's question as to why the development of the productive forces necessarily lead from primitive communism to slave society and why the new social wealth was not enjoyed collectively as it had been previously. It was due precisely to the low level of productivity (despite its relative increase in comparison with primitive communism) that a class society and private property were the immediate result and an objective historical necessity.

A socialist economy is and can exist only as an economy of high productivity. Otherwise, no matter what "set of moral relationships", it will very soon deteriorate and by devious ways transform itself into a system of social inequalities. Therefore to assert that socialism was a "valid historical program in the days of Caesar or Charlesmagne as well as now" simply is a misinterpretation of the historical process of the development of human society. Such a theory represents a utopian concept of socialism.

It is difficult to imagine how in our time one can divorce the level of productive forces from a certain type of social relationship, when the existing productive forces are so obviously and so brutally retarded by the prevailing social relationship. Nor is it possible to imagine that present-day capitalism can be adapted to the coming age of atomic energy.

Of course, if Helen Constas were right in attributing to Marx the belief "that classes and private property are the result of the division of labor" (and, I might emphasize, only the division of labor) then her conclusion that socialism becomes an impossibility for all time would have been correct. Fortunately, this is not the Marxist schemata of history. The actual historical development shows that the establishment of classes and private ownership represents a transformation of various forms of exploitation depending upon a given mode of production—starting with the appropriation of labor first in the form of surplus labor (slavery), then of surplus products (feudalism), and finally of surplus value (capitalism).

These different forms of exploitation resulted from the various ways in which labor power was combined with the means of production. Therefore each successive mode of production was one of higher productivity and greater progressiveness in comparison with the preceding one. According to Engels in *Anti-Duhring* (p. 279), "The materialist conception of history starts from the principle that production, and with production the exchange of its products, is the basis of every social order; that in every society which has appeared in history the distribution of the products, and with it the division of society into classes or estates, is determined by what is produced and how it is produced, and how the product is exchanged. According to this conception, the ultimate causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in the minds of men, in their increasing insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the mode of production and exchange; they are to be sought not in the *philosophy* but in the *economics* of the epoch concerned." (italics F. E.)

This does not mean as Helen Constas contends, that Marx's concept of historical materialism with its necessary stages of social development and its justification of previous class rule on historical grounds, has and must contribute to the amoral view of history prevalent today among "scientific sociologists". If one admits that the present social relationship is obsolete, that capitalism is retarding the further development of mankind and leading towards social catastrophe, then there can be no justification for the amoral view, if and where such views should prevail among "scientific sociologists".

"Neither to weep nor to laugh but to understand" does not mean to be indifferent and not to have moral standards. The very fact that Marx not only believed in but wanted socialism, and was appalled by oppression and exploitation offers evidence on this point.

"Historical events must be *judged*, not merely explained," claims Helen Constas. How is one, however, to judge without understanding?

JAMAICA, N. Y. A. DUBITSKY

Reply:

There is a difference between a possible and a necessary evolutionary sequence in history. Mr. Dubitsky states correctly "an increase in productivity in the next historical stage created the objective possibility for the development of a class society and private ownership." It also created the *possibility* (and this is overlooked by Mr. Dubitsky who transforms possibility into necessity in a sentence) for the continued collective enjoyment of the new social wealth. Why does one possible line of development (private property) actualize itself more in Europe and Asia? Furthermore you cannot ignore the fact that the other possibility (sharing the new wealth) *did also* actualize itself in some societies. It is a myth that all societies which are neither slave, feudal, or capitalist are mere subsistence groups whose members barely eke out a miserable existence, and are constantly on the brink of starvation. Societies which had not long ago passed (and by a safe margin) the mere subsistence level would long ago have been wiped out by one bad crop or hunting season. Furthermore they would never have been able to build up the complex art, music, dance, religious and other cultural life which they are rich in if they were perpetually grubbing a bare biological existence.

Those who believe that the only factor in the origin of classes is the level of productivity are victims of illogical thinking. The *presence* of classes proves a society has raised its level of productivity substantially above the bare minimum of food, shelter, and clothing necessary for biological survival. As a result it can support a class which is economically unproductive. But the *absence* of classes *doesn't* prove the *reverse*. This cannot be stressed too strongly. The absence of classes, in the Marxist sense, does not prove the group is at a low level of productivity (and anthropological evidence shows this is not a true correlation).

In short there were at least two possibilities as the result of the increase in the productive forces in the period of so-called primitive communism. I might add that the attitude of Marxists that there is only one possible solution to a social problem is not confined merely to the explanation of the rise of classes but permeates their entire system of thought. It has been aptly termed a one-way street system of history. The best known, and the most troublesome in the light of current events, statement of this idea is that *only* socialism can result from the collapse of capitalism.

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It is, however, quite apparent that there is a third possible successor to traditional capitalism, and that is burocratic collectivism (and in my personal opinion, the possibility most likely to be actualized). At any rate it is obvious that one cannot understand the history and social life of humanity in terms of an inevitable succession of events and systems which had to be that way and no other. There is no "all embracing concept or general law of the development of human society." One has always to consider not merely "What Was" but also "What Might Have Been". Or else one is not justified in trying to consider "What Might Be" and not merely "What Is."

For a brief and feeble minute, Mr. Dubitsky makes a half-hearted attempt to consider "What Might Have Been" but he is unable to endure the effort and slips back into his iron-bound realm of necessity. "A socialist economy is and can exist only as an economy of high productivity. Otherwise no matter what 'set of moral relationships', it will very soon deteriorate and by devious ways transform itself into a system of social inequalities." And here we have one of Mr. Dubitsky's assumptions—human nature is essentially evil. I might add that this conception of human nature, surprising as it may seem to some orthodox Marxists, is really not a peculiar "deviation" on the part of Mr. Dubitsky. Engels in *The Origin of the Family* puts it, "Sheer greed has been the driving spirit of civilization from its first day up to now: wealth, and more wealth, and still more wealth—the wealth not of society but of the wretched individual, its sole decisive goal." (page 336, Burns *Handbook of Marxism*)

We however would like to preserve what is best of Marxist thought by restricting such statements to the area which by unquestioned assumption they were meant to apply to. Thus we would say "Sheer greed has been the driving spirit of *Western* civilization" and we would investigate to ascertain what other societies have based themselves around the assumed value of accumulating wealth. And the course of our investigations would soon show us that there are other societies and civilizations which were based on quite other values, indeed some were based on the precise opposite of accumulating wealth. Thus we would not be led to the ridiculous idea that human nature is neither good nor evil under primitive communism; is evil in all economies of scarcity; and is good in an economy of abundance. (What, if anything these terms scarcity and abundance mean, we shall discuss presently). Rather we would be led to the conclusion that *social life may be built around any one of various possible sets of integrating value-systems.* And that far from the level of productivity one-sidedly determining what values predominate, the values influence the seeking and attainment of a particular level of productivity. The two realms interact, and one cannot be reduced to the other. As socialists we are interested in a certain set of values, and derive the particular level of productivity from them, not the other way around.

We have already pointed out that practically no societies exist at the basic biological level, including those termed "primitive communist". Let us now examine the concepts "Economy of scarcity" and "economy of abundance", for it is on the basis of a distinction between these two levels of economic life that the Marxists claim to find "the necessary objective conditions for socialism". Our first question is—a scarcity of *what*, and an abundance of *what?* Material objects to satisfy our needs, Mr. Dubitsky answers. *But what are needs?* This one syllable word, "needs," is one of the most ambiguous terms in all of Marxist thought.

If by "needs" is meant the fundamental physical necessities of food, clothing, and shelter necessary to maintain human life, then even by Marxist criteria, we long ago (from slavery on) achieved a level of production capable of doing that and more, which is why the exploitation of man by man is possible. But really Marxists are not interested in this sense of the term needs, for they realize well enough that needs are *historical* not biological. Needs are summed up together in the term: "standard of living." What is a need and a part of the standard of living of the American worker is not necessarily an element of the standard of living of the Japanese worker. And workers in each society are paid, not just enough to live on in the purely biological sense, but just enough to support and reproduce themselves in the historical standard of living they are accustomed to. They are paid just barely enough to satisfy their *historical needs.* "The value of labour-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the labourer . . . His natural wants, such as food, clothing, fuel, and housing, vary according to the climatic and other physical conditions of his country. On the other hand, the number and extent of his so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilization of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and degree of comfort in which, the class of free labourers has been formed. In contradistinction therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labour-power a historical and moral element." (*Capital,* Modern Library edition, p. 190)

We return now to our original question—what is the difference between an economy of scarcity and an economy of abundance? Obviously these terms "scarcity" and "abundance" are historical, relative. "The very poor lived better than the rich before." (Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*). The terms do not mean (although they are frequently used propagandistically to mean) scarcity and abundance of goods necessary for biological survival. We are human beings, not animals. Our wants are human, social, historical—and we can control them and consciously *decide what we need.*

What then is socialism? Is it a form of social organization to secure the needs which the majority of people living under capitalism feel they want? Is socialism a social form which will be able to, and *will* give all people air-conditioned houses, automobiles, synthetic clothing, television and a constantly rising standard of living? And is there no other social organization which can do this?

I maintain socialism is not equivalent to a high level of productivity, neither is it opposed to it.* It has no *necessary* connection with supplying the present historical "needs" of the people (many of which I feel are in no sense desirable, much less to be improved upon). Furthermore I think it is apparent that there are other social systems which are both non-capitalist and non-socialist, and which can increase indefinitely the standard of living and provide material abundance (ex. burocratic collectivism). The exploitation of one part of society by another has never yet been incompatible with a general rise in the standard of living, taken over a long period of time. Class form can succeed class form for there is no end to the historic needs of men, as modern advertising has joyfully discovered.

Then what is socialism? Simply the social form which, by abolishing exploitation, allows you to choose consciously

* I hope no one will superficially conclude I am *advocating* a lowering of the level of production in these remarks.

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and work toward your own needs, provided they do not interfere with the needs of others. If what interests you are refrigerators, autogyros, and travelling, you can work the time required for *these* things. If you wish to live by fishing and a vegetable patch and your need is to spend time making boats, you can do it. If what interests you is to find out what things interest people and why, you can do that too. Your life may be "individualistic", in a small group, or in a sizeable city. There will be no standard or criteria about which way you ought to live. There will be no uniform standard of living or any level of production toward which the entire society is straining under various five-year plans. There won't be any one goal which is the attainment of socialism, for socialism hasn't any objective prerequisites, or any social goal. Marx once summed up what socialism is in very succinct language, and with no reference either to objective prerequisites or historicity—"from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", or again "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all."

Socialism is the conscious realization of individual needs, and the responsible activity of achieving them: in short, the conditions under which one comes to know oneself.

NEW YORK CITY — HELEN CONSTAS

Books

THE LEVELLER TRACTS, 1647-1653. **Edited by William Haller and Godfrey Davis. Columbia University Press. $6.50.**

It is chiefly through the Leveller tracts, particularly those of John Lilburne, the outstanding agitator and pamphleteer of the lower middle class of his time, that we are able to learn of many of the political ideas and events connected with the most radical sections of English democratic thought during the Puritan revolution. For several reasons historians of the Puritan period have been tardy in doing justice to Lilburne and the Levellers. The subject has heretofore had to be studied in a multitude of tracts, many of them anonymous and all deeply involved in the extensive and complicated mass of ephemeral and more or less controversial literature of the Puritan revolution. Milton's polemics were singled out for attention in the eighteenth century because Milton was a great name on other grounds, and also because he spoke for the upper middle class which had come to power. The works of Lilburne and his followers had to wait until they were made generally accessible in public collections. Even the best historians, who were not principally interested in this phase of their subject, dealt impatiently with dissent, preferring to devote themselves to the great constitutional issue between Parliament and the crown and to the epic struggle of Cromwell against all antagonists, of whatever camp, who impeded his work of conquering and governing. The Levellers they regarded with varying degrees of displeasure or, at best, condescension. So long as Lilburne waged war on Cromwell's side, Samuel Gardiner, who set the tone and pattern for this period, treated him, on the whole, sympathetically, but not so when he turned against Cromwell. It was some time later before a juster understanding of the democratic forces at work in the Puritan Revolution began.

Theodore Calvin Pease in 1916 produced one of the earliest general works devoted to this subject, and it is still a standard in the field. Pease however tended to overemphasize the Leveller contributions to legal and political theory. While these are by no means insignificant, Pease tended to slight those phases of Leveller theory and activity dealing with economic and social reform. It remained for other writers to deal with phases of the subject not adequately treated by Pease. Professor William Haller of Columbia University has since published a number of works dealing with the Levellers, the latest of which is this compilation of the principal Leveller documents in their original form. The general reader who wants to get an uncolored understanding of the Leveller ideology need no longer seek out the rare book rooms of half a dozen libraries. Haller prefaces each document with a brief examination of the external and internal evidence, and explains the circumstances in which each was written.

The appearance of a number of articles in recent years, and other works in preparation, including a forthcoming biography of Lilburne, seem to indicate that the historical importance of the Levellers is finally being recognized.*

VIRGIL J. VOGEL

*Also cf. *Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution*, edited by Don M. Wolfe (Thomas Nelson, 1944, $5); *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, by Henry Holorenshaw (Vol. 21 of The New People's Library, Victor Gollancz, London, 1939); *Leftwing Democracy in the English Civil War*, by David W. Petegorsky (Victor Gollancz, London, 1940).—ED.

The Intelligence Office

FARM WANTED

Sir:

We are a group of C.O.'s and wives, most of us out of C.P.S. camp long enough to have gathered some money together, and we are anxious to start a cooperative farm as soon as possible this spring. We are looking for a 200-acre farm in the East to form a subsistence community and we can pay up to $2000 down.

If you could print this letter or its gist in your next issue, we would appreciate it very much and be glad to pay for the space.

VIRGINIA SALLENBACH — SOUNDVIEW AVE., WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.

—No charge. Send me some eggs when and if.—ED.

WILLIAM MORRIS'S IDEAS

Sir:

In "A Critique of Marxian Ideology" (POLITICS, Jan. 1946), Helen Constas stated that William Morris "wished to inaugurate a system of handicraft production." This is a repetition of a myth which has represented Morris as an anti-mechanistic visionary and has done a great deal of harm to the memory of this redoubtable socialist fighter and "ancestor".

Morris's only quarrel with the machine was that it had been divested of its true function of relieving drudgery and had instead tended to turn *all* work into drudgery. In *Art and Socialism*, he wrote:

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"The wonderful machines which in the hands of just and far-seeing men would have been used to minimize repulsive labor and to give pleasure—or in other words, added life—to the human race, have been so used on the contrary that they have driven all men into mere frantic haste and hurry, thereby destroying pleasure, that is life, on all hands. They have instead of lightening the labor of workmen, intensified it, and thereby added more weariness yet to the burden which the poor have to carry."

Satisfaction in work was, to Morris, the chief source of joy in life. "It is right and necessary," he said, "that all men should have work to do which shall be worth doing and be of itself pleasant to do, and which should be done under such conditions as would make it neither over-wearisome nor over-anxious."

It seems to me that such views deserve something more than the cursory dismissal, based besides on a misconception, Miss Constas gives them.

LONDON, ENGLAND GEORGE WOODCOCK

COMMUNION: A MODEST PROPOSAL

Sir:

Not to be outdone by Cooney's evangelism, I'd like to make the following suggestions for extending his communion with suffering Europe:—

1) Cut round holes in your clothes—Europe's masses are ragged.
2) Open the windows and turn off the steam—Europeans are cold.
3) Expose yourself to any and all epidemics in your vicinity—disease is raging in Europe.
4) Organize retreats to neighborhood concentration camps which can be set up very cheaply—all you need is some barbed wire.
5) Compel yourself to read every word every month by the ring of Christian martyrs who contribute letters to POLITICS—the spiritual life of Europe is also languishing for lack of solid intellectual pabulum.

That will be communion enough. You will experience absolution and the Europeans will die very grateful to you. (Hairshirts are specifically omitted because of the textile shortage.)

Yours in the Blood of the Lamb (except Tuesdays).

NEW YORK CITY GEORGE HALDAS

The Atomic Threat—or Whither Whither

Sir:

The other day, I was reading the column of that great American, Mr. Samuel Grafton, in that great American newspaper, *The New York Post,* and I had a thought. It dawned on me that mankind has only entered the dawn of the Era of Liberation and Civilization. Thanks to the phenomenon known as War, we Americans, along with our English cousins and our Russian allies, have taken the first step forward in the liberation and the civilization of the Poles, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, the Roumanians, the Abyssinians, the Albanians, the Greeks, the Koreans, the Chinese, the French, the Dutch, the Indonesians, the Cubans, the Jews, the Negroes, the Italians, the Germans, the Danes, the Norwegians, the Finns, the Latvians, the Chicagoans and sundry others. But now, in the very dawn of liberation, before one American, Englishman or Russian has as yet set foot on the planet of Mars, Saturn and Venus to liberate the slaves of these worlds, a group of unsocial-minded pacifistic scientists have invented the atomic bomb which threatens to make all future wars of liberation impossible. Mr. Editor, this is a serious situation. Mankind is at the cross roads. We face a future of freedom and war, or one of peace and stagnation with the very universe in chains.

We cannot allow this. In consequence, I have organized the Society for the Abolition of the Atomic Bomb, of which I have the honor to be President, Secretary and Treasurer. The purpose of this society is to guarantee the liberation of the cosmos. In order that this purpose may be achieved, as the foregoing shows, we must abolish this pacifistic bomb and make war again possible.

My society is well organized, well disciplined, and well led. But I need followers. I have no rank and file. I write this letter to you to appeal to you and to your readers to become my rank and file and to let me guarantee you a place in the history of liberation by joining you up as members of the Society for the Abolition of the Atomic Bomb. If you join, you can share with me the task of guaranteeing a future of liberation through war. Could there be any nobler task for a moral human being to perform in these days when there is a terrible danger of peace hanging over the world like a black cloud without any silver lining in it?

Friends, Comrades, Moral Beings, Men of Good Will, Fellow Liberators join me. Sign up in the Society for the Abolition of the Atomic Bomb. Let your voice ring out with mine in a defiant cry to scientists and other pacifists, warning them that we will not permit them to go on producing these bombs so that our great grandchildren will stagnate in pacifism. Fellow human beings, you have nothing to lose but peace.

ABOLISH THE ATOMIC BOMB AND MAKE WAR AGAIN POSSIBLE. CREATE THE LIBERATED COSMOS WITH FOGARTY.

Jonathan Titulescu Fogarty
President
Treasurer
Secretary
THE SOCIETY FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE ATOMIC BOMB.

—Pursuing our usual policy of freedom-of-letters-to-the-editor, we print the above. We feel bound to advise our readers, however, that Mr. Fogarty exaggerates the threat of the Atomic Bomb. A Usually Reliable Source in the State Department has assured us that World War III will take place as scheduled, Bomb or no Bomb. It is only fair to Mr. Fogarty to add, however, that our Source admitted that possibly World War IV might not occur, since a world war presumes the existence of a world.—ED.

CORRECTION

Sir:

In your footnote on the new dark bread last issue, you state "the more of the wheat kernel that is extracted, the less chance there is of the flour spoiling." Don't you mean the opposite: the *more* chance of spoiling (since this would explain why the highly centralized millers and bakers want a low rate of extraction—so that their products can be shipped long distances without spoilage)? Also, what happens to the parts of the wheat kernel that are not extracted?

STATEN ISLAND, N. Y. TERENCE DONAGHUE

—Yes, I do mean the opposite—slip of the typewriter. The non-extracted parts of the kernel go into "mill feed" which the millers sell to farmers for their livestock. This is one reason the average pig looks so much healthier than the average citizen.—ED.

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PACKAGES ABROAD

Current Information

"CARE" Packages

The Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE) is now accepting orders for its food packages. They will probably make the first shipments abroad before the end of April. CARE packages may now be sent to: France, Italy, Holland, Poland, Norway, Finland and Czechoslovakia. Austria, Belgium and Greece may soon be added.

CARE packages are surplus Army field rations, each weighing 30 lbs. net (49 gross) and designed to provide 30 meals. Contents include 10 lbs. of meat, 6½ lbs. of cereals, 4 lbs. of sugar and candy, ½ lb. butter, coffee, soap, matches, etc. Price is $15 each, which includes shipping. This is cheaper than you could send equivalent food yourself. (Delivery is guaranteed.)

Order blanks and an illustrated leaflet may be obtained from CARE. Address: 50 Broad Street, New York 4, N. Y.

PACKAGE AGENCIES

If you send through a commercial agency, it is important to be sure it is on the level. The OPA recently brought court actions, for example, against the following New York City firms alleging they overcharged customers or failed to send what they listed: British Food Parcel Service, Cassco International Corp., American Lloyd, Herman Tauber, Fred Reiss, Continental Relief Service, Special Parcel Service, and Mimosa Food Products.

A reliable agency is the International Gift Parcel Service, 654 Amsterdam Avenue, New York 25, N. Y.

PACKAGES TO AUSTRIA

It is now possible to send food packages to individuals in Austria through the package agencies. Packages are shipped from Copenhagen. It is also possible to send clothes in 20 lb. lots, also through an agency.

PACKAGES TO GERMANY

Only the first-class letter mail is now open to Germany. However, you can send food to individuals in certain parts of Germany through these channels;

Committee for Overseas Relief Supplies, 1834 *Broadway, New York City* 23. To British zone only. Goes via Stockholm. They do not know how long it takes. Kosher packages, no meat. A 7-lb. one for $6.75 contains fish, milk, cigarettes, etc. A 22-lb. one for $14.25 has butter, sugar, cheese, cigarettes, etc.

U.S. Europa Corp., 66 *Beaver St., New York City* 4. Sends an $8 package of food to *German prisoners in France.* Contains about 10 lbs. of meat, bacon and milk. Packages insured by Lloyds of London.

Joint Distribution Committee, 270 *Madison Ave., New York City.* You can send packages to *Jewish* friends in *Berlin* by putting the following address on the outside wrapper: American Joint Distribution Committee (UNRRA), Headquarters Berlin District, APO 755, c/o Postmaster, New York City. On a second, inside wrapping, you should address the package *in German* to your friend with your name as the sender. This service *may* also be available for other German Cities. Inquire of the J.D.C.

Additional Note: The Council of Relief Agencies Licensed for Operation in Germany (CRALOG) is composed of various private charitable agencies. It accepts gifts of money, food or clothing for distribution in Germany, but cannot deliver parcels to individuals. The International Rescue and Relief Committee (103 Park Ave., New York City) is a member of CRALOG, and is especially interested in helping socialists and antifascists. Its first shipment left New York for Bremerhaven on April 1.

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An Appeal

WILL YOU UNDERTAKE TO SEND FOOD PACKAGES REGULARLY TO A EUROPEAN FAMILY?

If so, fill out the blank below and we will send you one of the names in our files, together with full instructions as to size and weight allowed, how to mail, foods most needed, etc. We hope to arrange for each family to receive one food package a week (the maximum permitted). You may undertake to mail once a week, twice a month, or once a month, depending on the time and money you can spare. (The cost of each package, of course, depends on what you include. An average price, including postage, would run around $5.)

If you cannot, for any reason, send packages yourself, send us the money and we will buy the supplies and mail them ourselves.

Politics, 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y.

I want to help.

☐ Please send me the address of a European family, plus full mailing instructions. I will undertake to send them .....package(s) a month.

☐ I enclose $..... to pay for food packages. I will undertake to send you $..... a month to keep up the flow of packages.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY..... UNIT..... STATE.....

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